NATION

3.8 million-packet DoS attack on our website blocked: CBSE

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BUSINESS

LIC holds over 10% stake in Rajesh Exports

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SPORTS

Mirra beats Marta to reach French Open maiden final

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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DKS keeps Finance, Priyank gets Home, B'luru goes to Byregowda

UT Khader is Health Minister; Yathindra to handle Urban Development

BENGALURU, 4 JUNE

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday allotted portfolios to his 13 cabinet ministers. Shivakumar kept the crucial Finance ministry after appointing ex-IAS LK Atheeq as his financial advisor. He also kept Cabinet Affairs, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, Intelligence.

Priyank Kharge is now the Home Minister of Karnataka, excluding intelligence. He will continue as IT and BT Minister.

Krishna Byregowda has been given the tough task of managing Bengaluru. Ramalinga Reddy, who was reportedly eyeing the Bengaluru portfolio, has been given Major & Medium Irrigation.

Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara, who was earlier the home minister, is now incharge of Revenue and Sports. KH Muniyappa will handle Food & Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs, KJ George is yet again the Energy Minister and will also handle the vital tourism department.

MB Patil is the Large & Medium Industries, Infrastructure Development. Congress strongman Satish Jarkiholi is in charge of Public Works. Former Assembly speaker UT Khader, the only Muslim in the Cabinet, is now in charge of Health & Family Welfare.

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar addresses a high-level review meeting at Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru —*PTI*

Eshwar Khandre will handle Rural Development & Panchayat Raj, Byrathi Suresh got transport and Sharan Prakash Patil is in charge of Medical Education & Skill Development.

Former chief minister Siddaramaiah's son Yathindra Siddaramaiah was given Urban Development, in-cluding Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Drainage Board, KUIDFC, and all Urban Development Author-ities and Local Planning Authorities excluding BDA, BMRDA, GBA and the Commissionerate of Town & Country Planning.

Speaking earlier in the day amid reports of discontent, Shivakumar had dismissed speculation of a rift over portfolio allocations. "I am not aware of anybody being unhappy and no one has met me regarding the portfolios," he said.

DKS SEEKS ACTION PLAN FROM DEPTS IN 15 DAYS

A day after assuming office, Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday announced that his government would establish a separate secretariat to address public grievances.

He directed all departments to prepare action plans within 15 days and instructed officials not to succumb to pressure from ministers, MLAs or even his own office. Stressing the need for a "free, fair and corruption-free" administration, he said governance must be transparent and guided by conscience. After chairing a meeting with senior bureaucrats and police, Shivakumar said a dedicated minister would be appointed to hear complaints, demands and grievances from people visiting Bengaluru from across the state, including those staging protests and demonstrations.

Shivakumar also reviewed preparations for the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. He said no citizen should lose voting rights due to procedural difficulties and instructed officials to create awareness about the process. Local bodies should assist people in obtaining residential certificates and other documents required for SIR, while help desks may be set up where necessary, he added.

Focusing on education, Shivakumar highlighted a shortage of around 50,000 teachers in the State and said recruitment would be carried out in phases. He also emphasised the proper utilisation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds, noting that nearly Rs 8,000 crore is expected to be spent annually in Karnataka.

A new CSR policy has already been approved by the Cabinet, and guidelines will be issued shortly. District authorities have been directed to identify industries and monitor how companies spend the mandatory 2 per cent CSR allocation, particularly for improving schools and educational infrastructure. He added that officials have been instructed to work on creating an NRI Secretariat as well. On law and order, Shivakumar instructed police to establish dedicated squads in every taluk to monitor rowdy elements and habitual offenders. —*Salar News*

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Sebi bans Bengaluru's Rajesh Exports over ₹15 lakh crore scam

BENGALURU, 4 MAY

Market regulator SEBI has accused Bengaluru-based gold refiner and jewellery maker Rajesh Exports Ltd (REL) of overstating its revenue by more than Rs 15 lakh crore between FY21 and FY25 and diverting company funds for unauthorised purposes.

In an interim order, SEBI said the company reported consolidated revenue of Rs 15.18 lakh crore over five years. However, most of this revenue was attributed to its Swiss subsidiary, Valcambi SA, whose audited financial statements showed only a small fraction of the amounts reported by REL. SEBI highlights that 97 per cent to 99 per cent of the company's consolidated revenue originates from foreign subsidiaries.

According to SEBI, Valcambi recorded revenue mainly from refining and processing charges, while REL and its holding company, Global Gold Refineries (GGR), reported the full value of gold transactions. The regulator questioned how such large revenues could be reported when the operating subsidiary itself showed far lower income.

SEBI also alleged that around Rs 926 crore of company funds were routed into personal accounts. Of this, Rs 7.4 crore was allegedly used by company chairman Rajesh Mehta for personal derivatives trading.

The regulator further flagged transactions worth more than Rs 11,400 crore with Affluence Shares and Stocks. SEBI said the entity denied having any business relationship with Rajesh Exports.

The regulator has barred Rajesh Mehta from buying, selling or dealing in the securities market until further orders. It has also criticised the company's auditors for failing to detect irregularities in its accounts.

Mehta pushed back, stating that the disclosures are accurate and the discrepancy stems from SEBI calculating standalone figures instead of consolidated revenues.

SEBI has also criticised the company's statutory auditors, PV Ramana Reddy & Co and BSD & Co, for allegedly failing to flag irregularities, including opaque accounting practices, questionable transactions and the lack of supporting documents. —*Salar News*

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—*PTI*

Marjane Satrapi: Voice of Iranian resistance no more

PARIS, 4 JUNE

Acclaimed Iranian-French cartoonist and filmmaker Marjane Satrapi, a prominent advocate for women's rights, has died at 56, the French presidency said Thursday. President Emmanuel Macron and his wife "pay tribute to a remarkable artist who transformed an Iranian childhood into a universal fable," the statement said. News broadcaster BFM TV and other French media reported Satrapi has "died of sadness" a little over a year after the death of her husband, Swedish film producer and actor Mattias Ripa, according to a statement from people close to the artist. —*PTI*

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'NO FULL SCALE WAR WITH IRAN'

Shooting moderately: Don redefines ceasefire

WASHINGTON DC, 4 JUNE

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday offered his own definition of the fragile ceasefire in the ongoing US-Iran conflict, suggesting that limited exchanges of fire may not necessarily derail efforts to avoid a wider war.

"In that part of the world, ceasefire is when you're shooting in a more moderate manner," Trump told reporters

According to a report by The Wall Street Journal, Trump has told close aides that he does not want to resume full-scale war with Iran unless Tehran directly attacks American troops. The report comes days after Iran allegedly launched missiles and drones at US military bases in the region and Kuwait International Airport despite an indefinite ceasefire being in force since 21 April.

The stance suggests the U S President may tolerate smaller ceasefire violations rather than risk a broader conflict in West Asia. Trump also expressed optimism about ongoing negotiations, saying a breakthrough "could happen over the weekend". The discussions reportedly centre on US demands for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, the dismantling of Iran's nuclear programme and the elimination of its stockpile of enriched uranium.

The remarks come amid reports that Washington and Tehran are working on a memorandum of understanding to establish a framework for negotiations.

Iran, has demanded that the US unfreeze Iranian assets or provide economic support as part of any future agreement. —*PTI*

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5 killed in fire at Bihar hospital

MUZAFFARPUR, 4 JUNE

Five patients choked to death at a private hospital in the Mu-zaffarpur district of Bihar on Thursday after smoke filled the ICU due to a fire. The staff allegedly ran away leaving those admitted there in the lurch, an official said.

A short circuit apparently triggered the fire in the hospital. Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary directed the authorities to pay an ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh to the next of kin of the dead.

Blaming hospital authorities for the loss of lives, officials said, "The staff who should have helped with evacuation ran away. And the patients got trapped."

She added that a fire audit was carried out in November 2025. "We are examining whether the hospital has been complying with the audit recommendations," the officials said. Girivar Dayal Singh, the Commissioner of Tirhut Division, said the hospital owners were on the run. —*PTI*

A man looks at the charred remains after a fire broke out in the ICU of a private hospital in Bihar's Muzaffarpur on Thursday —*PTI*

UPSC implements face authentication protocol

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

The UPSC successfully implemented face authentication in the 2026 Civil Services preliminary examination, an official statement issued on Thursday said.

The face-authentication protocol ensures that the candidate whose photo was uploaded at the time of filling the application form matches when they appear with the admit card to write the exam, it said.

The system enabled live, real-time authentication of candidates at examination venues through mobile-phone-based verification by invigilators, eliminating impersonation, said a UPSC statement. UPSC conducted a real-time face-authentication exercise at all 2,072 examination venues during this year's Civil Services (Preliminary) Examinations 2026, held on 24 May, it said. —*PTI*

MONSOON ARRIVES IN KARNATAKA, KERALAM

BENGALUR, 4 JUNE

Southwest Monsoon has officially arrived in Karnataka. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Thursday announced its onset over the coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi. The monsoon completed its advance over Keralam.

Karnataka saw continuous rainfall and thunderstorm activity. While the normal date for the monsoon's arrival is 1 June, this year the onset was recorded on 4 June.

The monsoon advanced into the remaining parts of the South-west and Southeast Arabian Sea. The IMD said that India is expected to see 90 per cent of the long-period average this year. During the past two days, convective cloudiness had increased over the Southeast Arabian Sea. There was widespread rainfall over Keralam during the last two days. —*ANI*

DMK to skip INDIA meet; to not sit with Cong in LS

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

- Lok Sabha approved DMK's request for a separate seating arrangement.

DMK is unlikely to attend the INDIA bloc meeting scheduled in New Delhi on 8 June and has also secured approval to sit separately from the Congress in the Lok Sabha, signalling a further widening of the rift between the former allies.

Sources said the DMK has informed opposition leaders that it will not participate in the meeting, which is expected to be attended by around 15 parties, including Congress, TMC, Shiv Sena (UBT), SP and other INDIA bloc constituents. The leaders are expected to discuss a joint strategy against the BJP-led government.

The developments follow a dramatic political realignment in Tamil Nadu after the Assembly elections, when the Congress ended its long-standing alliance with the DMK and joined the government led by actor-politician C Joseph Vijay's TVK.

Reflecting the changed equations, the Lok Sabha Secretariat has approved the DMK's request for a separate seating arrangement. The party had sought the change through a letter from DMK leader Kanimozhi Karunanidhi to Speaker Om Birla, arguing that it was no longer appropriate for its MPs to sit alongside Congress members. —*PTI*

RAJYA SABHA POLLS

Cong nominates Kharge, Mansoor Ali Khan, Khera from K'taka

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Congress on Thursday announced its list of seven candidates for the Rajya Sabha elections, renominating party chief Mal-likarjun Kharge from Karnataka.

The party also fielded AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan and its media and publicity department in-charge Pawan Khera from Karnataka.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi will be in Bengaluru on Friday to accompany Kharge at Vidhana Soudha during the filing of his nomination papers for Rajya Sabha. Kharge is the Leader of Opposition in the Upper House of the Parliament, whose term in Rajya Sabha is ending on 25 June.

AICC General Secretary, Organisation, KC Venugopal, said the Congress has fielded former MP Meenakshi Natarajan in Madh-ya Pradesh.

The party also fielded Praveen Chakravarty, its head of the Da-ta Analytics and Professionals Wing, for the Rajya Sabha elec-tion in Tamil Nadu, besides renominating Neeraj Dangi from Rajasthan.

Pranav Jha, attached to the Congress president, is nominated from Jharkhand.

The Rajya Sabha elections will be held on 18 June.

The last date for filing of nominations is 8 June. —*Agencies*

>>More on Pg 3

No courage to take retest: NEET aspirant kills self

NAGPUR, 4 JUNE

Days after 18-year-old National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate) (NEET-UG) aspirant Akanksha Chaturvedi allegedly ended her life in Nagpur, her family stumbled upon a note written by her, in which she apologised to them, saying she did not have the courage to appear for a retest of the medical entrance.

In the emotional note, the student, who hailed from Madhya Pradesh, said there was "no guarantee" that she would score good marks in the retest, and said she had "ruined everything" for them.

Chaturvedi had appeared for the NEET-UG exam on 3 May, which was cancelled on 12 May following allegations of a question paper leak. A re-examination was then scheduled for 21 June. The development left her anxious and upset, according to her family members. Her father, Krishna Kumar Chaturvedi, a small farmer who also worked as a cook in Nagpur to support the family, told the police that his daughter's optimistic demeanour changed following the rescheduling.

She was found hanging in her room in Nagpur, where she was preparing for the examination at a coaching institute, on 20 May. Her family has submitted the hand-written note to the police on 1 June, and it is now part of the investigation. —*PTI*

Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, or SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.

University of Liverpool to open Bengaluru campus

BENGALURU, 4 JUNE

The University of Liverpool on Thursday received a letter of approval from the Union Ministry of Education to establish a campus in Bengaluru. The ministry described the move in a statement as "a significant step toward internationalisation of higher education under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020." The letter was handed over by Higher Education Secretary and University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Vineet Joshi to Professor Richard Grose, Provost of University of Liverpool, Bengaluru, in the presence of many senior dignitaries. The campus will encourage academic collaboration, student mobility and the presence of reputed global institutions in India, as well as boost bilateral relations between India and the UK, the ministry added. —*PTI*

Four goats killed in stray dog attack in Gundlupet

GUNDLUPET, 4 JUNE

Four goats were mauled to death and two critically injured when a pack of stray dogs attacked near Ambedkar colony in Gundlupet town on Thursday. The livestock belonged to Ramaswamy of the colony. The incident occurred while the owner was grazing goats near the fields of the colony. The rising stray dog menace, resulting in goat killings, has raised concerns in Gundlupet town. Farmer Ramaswamy urged the Gundlupet Town Municipal Council to take measures to end the menace and provide compensation for his loss, which he estimated at one lakh rupees due to the stray dogs' attacks. —*SALAR NEWS*

6 more arrested in Vijayapura land dispute murder

VIJAYAPURA, 4 JUNE

Six more individuals, including the main suspect, have been arrested in connection with the murder of six people in Vijayapura district on 29 May, over a land dispute. With this, a total of 18 arrests have been made so far in the shocking incident in Govindapura village, Chadachana Taluk. Police confirmed that the main accused, Appugouda Patil, was among those detained on Wednesday. The massacre involved Chandrakant Nirale, his sons Samarth and Rahul Dundappa Nirale, Shivaputra Nirale, and Shabbir Attar Bikar. On 1 June, 12 accused, including key suspect Kallanagouda Patil, were arrested. The police produced the accused in court after medical examinations, and sources say they are searching for a few more individuals involved in the case. —*PTI*

Belagavi youth loses Rs 3.56 lakh in online gaming

BELAGAVI, 4 JUNE

Online gaming and betting scams continue to trap unsuspecting users, with a youth from Kudchi in Raibag taluk losing Rs 3.56 lakh in an alleged scam. A case has been registered with the District Cyber Crime Police Station. According to the complaint, 30-year-old Faiz Ahmed invested money in an online platform called 'Khelo 24 Bet'. Initially, the platform returned profits, convincing him to invest larger sums. Between 6 January and 23 May 2026, Faiz reportedly invested Rs 19,04,068, receiving Rs 15,47,545 in returns. However, when he attempted to withdraw Rs 3,56,532, the amount was not credited back. Realising he had been cheated, he approached the Cyber Crime Department and lodged a complaint. —*SALAR NEWS*

Kannadigas priority in pvt sector: DKS

DKS to form task force to combat rowdies, vows to help rural economies

BENGALURU, 4 JUNE

Karnataka's new Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday said that priority would be given to Kannadigas in private sector jobs, as he outlined a series of major decisions taken in the first Cabinet meeting and at Vidhana Soudha.

In a post on X on Thursday, Shivakumar said the Karnataka government has resolved to give new momentum to the state's development immediately after assuming office, announcing key decisions including free bus passes for school and college students, measures to fill 56,000 vacant posts and preference for Kannadigas in private sector employment.

"All-round development of the State is our mission," he added.

Shivakumar added that employment exchange centres will be established to connect youth with private sector job opportunities, and departments have been directed to prepare recruitment schedules to fill vacancies within fixed timelines.

Shivakumar also announced the constitution of Special Task Forces to improve law and order in Karnataka and completely eradicate rowdy activities across the State.

Chief Minister DK Shivakumar meets senior police officials at Vidhana Soudha, on Thursday —*SALAR*

Additionally, he stated that a new tourism policy will soon be formulated for the comprehensive development of coastal tourism, emphasising that the government will place special focus on promoting tourism along the coast.

Expressing concern over the decline in the rural economy and increasing migration to urban areas, Shivakumar declared that strengthening the rural economy will be a key priority of the government. He also announced the implementation of all budget announcements.

Speaking to reporters, Shivakumar also said that government was only was only collecting information on beneficiaries, amid reports of alleged misuse worth crores of rupees.

"We are not revising them (schemes). There are discrepancies in the mobile numbers and details of beneficiaries. In the Gruha Jyothi scheme, 200 units of electricity are provided free per household, but some households use it for commercial purposes. This scheme has 1.60 crore beneficiaries," Shivakumar said. "If those who are eligible receive free electricity, that is not our concern."

> **Not satisfied with functioning of Karnataka Bhavan in Delhi; will hold meeting with retired officials when I visit the city**
>
> DK Shivakumar, Chief Minister

Speaking to reporters in the City, he said, "Shouldn't we have information about all the beneficiaries? Some individuals have five meters under one name, and the government should have information on whether they are owners or tenants, and whether they belong to our State or another state, right? We are collecting that information."

Payments under the Gruha Lakshmi scheme were made in the names of deceased individuals and those who are ineligible, resulting in a discrepancy of Rs 120 crore, he said.

On Mekedatu, he said that the Karnataka had submitted its DPR to the Centre, and dismissed Tamil Nadu's protests the mega dam irrespective of who is in power. —*Agencies*

Muslim leaders seek 5 Cabinet berths

Muslim religious leaders and clerics in the State demanded that five Cabinet posts for members of the community. A gathering of Muslim leaders and clerics at the Hazrat Syed Fateh Shah Wali Dargah in Bellinagar in Bengaluru on Wednesday evening warned the Congress leadership that the party would face serious consequences in the next assembly election if their demand is not met. UT Khader was the sole Muslim to be made a Minister in Shivakumar's new government. The leaders said that Congress leaders including BZ Zameer Ahmad Khan, NA Harris, Tanveer Sait, and Saleem Ahmed should be inducted into the ministry.

No women in DKS' Cabinet, says Alva

Senior Congress leader Margaret Alva expressed "deep disappointment" over the lack of women's representation in the new Cabinet. "I would have loved to see at least one Congress woman in the new Karnataka Cabinet," she posted on X on Wednesday. Alva is has served as Governor of several states. Notably, Laxmi Hebbalkar was the only woman minister in the Siddaramaiah Cabinet. Shivakumar responded, "There are a lot of vacancies". His Cabinet currently has only 13 Ministers against the sanctioned strength of 34.

Brand B'luru: BWSSB to launch global water innovation network

BENGALURU, 4 JUNE

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is exploring the establishment of the Bengaluru Global Water Innovation Network (BGWIN), an international collaboration platform aimed at transforming Bengaluru into a globally recognised centre for water innovation, urban water security and sustainable infrastructure development, according to a statement.

The initiative, aligned with Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's 'Brand Bengaluru' vision, seeks to bring together water utilities, government agencies, universities, research institutions, startups, investors and civil society organisations to address emerging challenges in the water and wastewater sector, the BWSSB statement said.

"A secure water future is the foundation of a resilient global city. The establishment of BGWIN marks a historic step towards transforming Bengaluru into a global centre for water innovation and advancing our vision of Brand Bengaluru," Shivakumar was quoted as saying in the statement.

BWSSB officials said BGWIN is intended to strengthen Bengaluru's position in urban water management by promoting innovation.

A key component of the proposal is a Centre of Excellence with a dedicated Technology Innovation Hub focused on artificial intelligence-driven predictive analytics, smart metering, decentralised water treatment systems, water reuse solutions and advanced utility management practices.

The initiative will also emphasise pilot-scale testing of emerging technologies before Citywide deployment, enabling BWSSB to evaluate solutions under real-world conditions and reduce implementation risks.

Officials said BGWIN could also create opportunities for intellectual property development, technology licensing and commercialisation of innovations. "Our objective is to position Bengaluru as a global model for urban water security," said BWSSB Chairman Dr V Ram Prasath Manohar. —*Salar News*

New cabinet, old faces: LoP likens govt to masked Dh'sthala man

BENGALURU, 4 JUNE

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly R Ashoka said that people expected "fresh energy" with the change of Chief Ministers, but the "new Cabinet has the same old faces".

> **Their (Congress) bus had already broken down. They should have just changed the bus. But instead, they changed the driver**
>
> Chaluvadi Narayanaswamy, LoP in the Council

Speaking at a press conference, he said "This is an old government in a new disguise. It is like the mask man of Dharmasthala".

The barb likely refers to CN Chinnayya, who claimed that he had buried hundreds of bodies over decades in the temple town of Dharmasthala, only for the Special Investigation Team to later name him as an accused in the case.

Ashoka noted various problems in Karnataka, including drought, damage from rains, deaths linked to microfinance-related distress, wall collapses and pothole ridden roles. He claimed Karnataka ranks second in the country in terms of suicides.

"This government is like an old movie with a new poster," he added. "No real change can be expected from it. Only the person occupying the chair has changed."

Separately on X, Ashoka lauded Kerala's new Chief Minister VD Satheesan for releasing white paper on his state's finances and demanded that Karnataka Chief Minister DK Shivakumar did the same. —*Salar News*

For power, go to DKS; to strengthen Cong, come to me: New KPCC Prez

BENGALURU, 4 JUN

Those who want power and positions should go to Chief Minister DK Shivakumar while those who want to strengthen the party should come to me, said newly appointed Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) President BK Hariprasad on Thursday.

He added that his comment had no additional meaning and should be taken at face value.

The 71-year-old MLC was appointed the KPCC President on Wednesday, replacing Shivakumar.

KPCC President BK Hariprasad with former CM Siddaramaiah—*SALAR*

"My prayer to everyone in the party is, Rahul Gandhi, Maliikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi are fighting our cause. We have to give strength to them. To do that we should also get on to the streets and fight," Hariprasad, an OBC leader, said when responding to a question on whether senior leaders who were not made ministers will be utilised for party organisation work.

Clarifying that he never said he wanted to become minister, Hariprasad said: "I'm not here for power, I'm a soldier and worker of the Congress party....I have worked for the party for 53 years in 20 states."

Hariprasad added that the Congress was committed to the idea of secularism. —*PTI*

STOP TO SMELL THE MANGOES

People smell mangoes during the opening day of the annual Mango and Jackfruit Mela at Lalbagh Botanical Garden in Bengaluru. This year's mela features over 80 stalls with over 50 varieties of organic, carbide-free mangoes and 10+ jackfruit types sold directly by farmers —*MOHAMMED ASAD*

FM flags poverty, lack of female literacy in Yadgir

YADGIR, 4 JUNE

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday voiced concern over the poor socio-economic indicators in Karnataka's Yadgir district. Her remarks came after she inaugurated a NABARD-supported groundnut value-addition unit in the district run entirely by women.

The Rajya Sabha member from Karnataka called for urgent, focused intervention by the Centre, the state, and local administration to address Yadgir's poor indicators — low female literacy, high multidimensional poverty, last rank in the state's Human Development Index (HDI), and the lowest per-capita income.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launches a Farmers Training and Common Facility Centre (CFC) in Yadgi, on Thursday —*X @NSITHARAMANOFFC*

She urged local representatives, district officials and the Agriculture Secretary to pay special attention to the initiative and emphasised that development could not be achieved by governments alone.

Explaining the rationale behind the establishment of the groundnut-processing facility, Sitharaman said the district produced around 22,500 metric tonne of groundnuts annually and had significant potential for value addition.

"We have now established a unit that can roast groundnuts, extract oil, and manufacture products such as peanut butter," she said.

Drawing a comparison with Andhra Pradesh's famed mango-producing district, she said Chittoor is renowned for its mangoes. "I hope Yadgir becomes famous for its groundnuts." —*PTI*

NO VOTER SHOULD MISS OUT: CM

Duty bound to conduct SIR: GBA head

BENGALURU, 4 JUNE

GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao said that all necessary preparations were underway for the upcoming Special Intensive Revision of Electoral rolls, with more than 70 per cent of the 88.95 lakh voters in Bengaluru already mapped according to the 2002 rolls.

He said that officials would begin house-to-house survey on 30 June, which will continue until 29 July.

Rao told PTI that the government was "duty-bound" to go ahead with the SIR process.

"We request the cooperation of all citizens," he added. Forms will be distributed to individual households, and residents will be requested to sign and return them. The forms may also be collected directly by the BLOs. The BLOs (Booth Level Officers) have been instructed to follow up and obtain details from every household as far as possible. More than 8,000 BLOs will be deployed for this exercise."

GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao, on Thursday—*X @GBA_OFFICE*

He said that the draft rolls will be published on 5 August, and claims and objections can be submitted until 4 September. The final list will be published on 7 October.

SVEEP and IEC activities will be organized in all urban corporations to create awareness among the citizens. Awareness programs will also be conducted through auto tippers, his statement added.

"Mapping is just a procedure to make the work easy and simplified for Booth Level Officers (BLOs) and electors. Enumeration form will be given to every one, based on which the procedure will be taken forward. Mapping percentage, in no way, will affect the SIR exercise," Rao said at the a press conference.

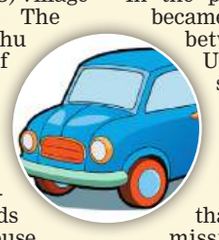
In a statement, Rao added that Bengaluru Urban district has achieved 78.93 per cent of progress in mapping activity while Bengaluru Central stands at 67.53 per cent, Bengaluru South is 67.93 per cent and Bengaluru North is 69.23 per cent.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister DK Shivakumar directed all senior officials to treat the exercise with utmost seriousness and ensure proper guidance to subordinate officers, adding that help desks must be established at the booth level to assist citizens in obtaining necessary documents. He said that no eligible voter should lose their right. —*Salar News*

3-yr-old gets trapped in car while playing, dies

YADGIR, 4 JUNE

A three-year-old baby died after accidentally getting trapped inside a car trunk in Tonasanahalli (S) village of Yadgir taluk. The child, Basavaprabhu is the son of Kottureshwara Pujyar of the village.



The incident occurred when the child was playing with his friends in front of the house. During the play, he notice that the trunk of a car parked in the house compound was open and climbed inside. Unfortunately, the trunk lid closed and locked on its own.

Unable to open the trunk from inside, the frightened child tried to move towards the front of the car by crawling beneath the seats. In the process, his head became stuck in the gap between the seats. Unable to free himself, he struggled intensely and eventually suffocated to death inside the vehicle.

After noticing that the child was missing, his worried parents and neighbours began frantically searching for him. After several hours, they became finally checked the trunk of the car parked at the house.

Tragically, they found the child lying dead. —*Salar*

Power tiff grips Kolkata Municipal Corp

As TMC fractures, Bengal sees a series of resignations by party councillors

KOLKATA, 4 JUNE

The battle for control of the TMC has shifted from the Assembly to the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC), with uncertainty over Mayor Firhad Hakim's future, and growing fears within the party that the civic body could become the next arena of rebellion after the dramatic split in the legislature wing.

A day after 58 rebel MLAs out of the 80 TMC MLAs wrested control of the TMC legislature party and installed expelled legislator Ritabrata Banerjee as Leader of Opposition, the spotlight turned to Kolkata's civic headquarters.

The uncertainty deepened after senior TMC MLA **Kunal Ghosh** announced on Wednesday that party supremo Mamata Banerjee had accepted Hakim's request to resign as mayor. However, Hakim later clarified that he had not yet resigned. Against this backdrop, some leaders fear that any attempt to force Hakim's exit could trigger a rebellion.

This comes after Hakim's participation in an administrative meeting convened by Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari at Nabanna.

Meanwhile, Mamata's trusted lieutenant Krishna Chakraborty stepped down as the Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation mayor after 16 years on Thursday.

Though she initially said this was to "devote more time to herself", she later clarified she was finding it difficult to fulfill her commitments in the wake of a disintegration in the civic body structure. A special session of the corporation would be held on 19 June, following court orders. This comes after councillors arrived for a monthly meeting only to find the doors of the assembly hall locked on 22 May.

Mayor Firhad Hakim & Mamata's aide Krishna Chakraborty —*PTI*

- West Bengal's Food and Supplies Department ordered verification to identify and delete ineligible beneficiaries from the Public Distribution System, linking the process to the outcome of SIR of electoral rolls.

COMPLAINT AGAINST MAMATA

A police complaint has been filed against Mamata Banerjee by an advocate, alleging that her recent public remarks critical of constitutional institutions and "linking the Union government to a political killing in Bangladesh" were "prejudicial to the nation's sovereignty and public order".

The complaint was filed on Wednesday by advocate Rinku Chatterjee Singh of the Calcutta High Court's Jalpaiguri Circuit Bench at the Cyber police station in Siliguri.

'CHOR, CHOR' SLOGAN GREETS ARRESTED COUNCILLOR

'Chor, chor' (thief, thief) slogan greeted Trinamool Congress councillor Mahesh Sharma, who was arrested in connection with alleged extortion and intimidation in his ward under KMC, when he was brought to the Bankshall court here for production on Thursday. —*PTI*

TMC LEADER HIDES FROM COPS

A video shared by BJP IT cell Chief Amit Malviya purportedly showed a TMC leader hiding under a bed as angry residents surrounded his home in Cooch Behar's Mathabhanga, accusing him of collecting "cut money" from beneficiaries of government housing schemes. Malviya claimed police later rescued the leader. The incident comes amid growing demands in parts of West Bengal for the return of alleged 'cut money' collected during the previous TMC regime —*PTI*

BJP announces candidates for RS polls in 5 states

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

BJP on Thursday announced its candidates for the Rajya Sabha elections in five states and the Odisha bypoll, fielding national general secretary Tarun Chugh from Madhya Pradesh and former Rajasthan BJP chief Satish Poonia from Rajasthan. Notably, the party did not nominate Union ministers Ravneet Singh Bittu and George Kurian, whose terms in the Upper House end on 21 June. In Odisha, BJP named Debashish Samantaray, a former BJD leader and ex-Rajya Sabha MP who recently joined the party, as its candidate for the by-election. The party also fielded Rajubhai Shukla, Mukeshbhai Rathwa, Mansingh Parmar and Jitendra Meghjibhai Kanzariya from Gujarat; Rajneesh Agrawal from Madhya Pradesh; Alka Gurjar from Rajasthan; A Sharda Devi from Manipur; and Tai Tagak from Arunachal Pradesh. Rajya Sabha elections will be held on 18 June. —*PTI*

—*ANI*

MP's Barkatullah varsity to be named 'Vagdevi Bhojpal'

BHOPAL, 4 JUNE

The executive council of Barkatullah University has approved renaming it 'Vagdevi Bhojpal University' to honour regional heritage and Raja Bhoj's contributions. Registrar Dr SB Singh said the move aims to recognise Bhoj's influence on history, culture, and knowledge, noting Bhopal's ancient name was 'Bhojpal'. The proposal now awaits final approval from the state government. Opposition from some members, including Dr Tahira Abbasi, argued the current name honours a freedom fighter. Madhya Pradesh has previously renamed places such as Bhopal's Habibganj Station and Hoshangabad. Barkatullah University was established in 1970, offering diverse disciplines across eight districts. —*PTI*

6 of 9 candidates quit M'rashtra council polls race

MUMBAI/NASHIK, 4 JUNE

The contest for the 18 June Maharashtra Legislative Council election from the Nashik local authorities' constituency narrowed to three candidates after six of the nine contenders withdrew their nominations on the final day on Thursday.

Those who withdrew included independents Ganesh Gite, Vishnu Mhaisdhune, Nivrutti Bodke, Kunal Darade and Pervez Kokani, along with ISLAM party candidate Mohammed Khaleed Abdul Rasheed. The contest is now between Mahayuti nominee Narendra Darade of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena and independents Gokul Gite and Prasad Hiray.

The Shiv Sena (UBT), which had been allotted the seat by the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), opted out citing a lack of financial resources and insufficient votes.

Meanwhile, NCP candidate Vikram Kakade, contesting the MLC polls, disclosed in his election affidavit that he had extended a Rs 10 crore loan to Jay Pawar, son of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

Kakade declared family assets exceeding Rs 150 crore, including luxury vehicles, properties in Pune and Dubai, and loans worth Rs 41.8 crore.

In the Konkan seat, MVA candidate Bal Mane withdrew, alleging "horse trading" and claiming his decision was aimed at preventing malpractice. —*PTI*

LDF left Rs 5.07L cr debt: Kerala CM

T'PURAM, 4 JUNE

Kerala Chief Minister VD Satheesan hit out at the previous LDF government on Thursday, claiming that it had left behind huge liabilities, including KIIFB borrowings, amounting to Rs 5.07 lakh crore.

He also alleged that claims were made about nearly Rs 6,000 crore being left in the treasury to "mislead" the public.

The CM asked why the amount was not used to clear liabilities like the around Rs 2,000 crore arrears of SupplyCo or the payment of the third instalment of funds to local bodies.

He also said that thousands of crores in DA and DR arrears of government employees and pensioners remained unpaid.

Referring to the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board, Satheesan said it had liabilities of Rs 56,000 crore.

The CM said that when he was in the opposition, he had warned that KIIFB borrowings would eventually fall within the state's borrowing limit, and that is exactly what has happened.

He said the LDF government had claimed that KIIFB would operate independently of the government and that its borrowings would not impact Kerala's borrowing limit.

Satheesan said he had asked the LDF government to ensure that at least 50 per cent of KIIFB projects generated revenue, but it was not implemented.

Meanwhile, the Kerala government's fiscal status report has called for a restructuring of KIIFB as the institution has outlived its original purpose and has become a parallel fiscal authority whose debts now fall on the state government. — *PTI*

CM questions Communists' role in WWII

Kerala Chief Minister VD Satheesan attacked the Communists, accusing them of "acting against India's interests before and after Independence."

The CM, while speaking in the Assembly for the vote of thanks to the Governor on Thursday, said that during WWII, Communists acted as per the stand of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin. Alleging that communists opposed the Independence movement, Satheesan claimed they had revealed the hideouts of Congress leaders during the Quit India Movement.

TN Chief Nainar rules out Annamalai quitting BJP

CHENNAI, 4 JUNE

Tamil Nadu BJP President Nainar Nagendran on Thursday dismissed speculation that former state chief K Annamalai is quitting the party or planning to launch a new political outfit, insisting the BJP remains united despite its recent electoral setback.

Nagendran said Annamalai had neither submitted a resignation letter nor drawn up plans for a separate party. Explaining Anna malai's visit to Delhi, he said the former state president had primarily gone to meet Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan over fertiliser-related issues, though he also met BJP general secretaries.

The clarification comes amid growing unease among party cadres. BJP Yuva Morcha state secretary R Yogesh urged the leadership to issue an official statement to prevent confusion and a possible exodus of workers. Supporters of Annamalai also put up posters in Madurai depicting him alongside actors Rajinikanth and Ajith.

Amid the speculation, BJP fishermen's wing state president M.C. Munusamy resigned from the party.

Annamalai met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi on 2 June. Party sources said he was asked to put any resignation plans on hold. Before leaving for Delhi, Annamalai said he would explain his position within two days. — *PTI*

India, Venezuela vow long-term energy tie-up

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

India and Venezuela have vowed to establish a long-term energy partnership following extensive talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Venezuelan Acting President Delcy Rodriguez, who is on a five-day visit to New Delhi.

Amid supply disruptions caused by the West Asia crisis, New Delhi has aggressively diversified its crude oil procurement. Venezuela has rapidly emerged as India's third-largest oil supplier since April, when purchases resumed following the lifting of US sanctions.

The discussions focused on both upstream and downstream energy activities, with Rodriguez framing India as a "preferred energy partner" due to its stable, long-term market demand. The leaders also explored broadening economic ties into critical minerals, gold, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and automobiles. The Venezuelan delegation, exploring India's industrial capabilities, is expected to visit Reliance Industries' Jamnagar refinery.

Additionally, New Delhi raised the issue of over USD 500 million in outstanding dividends owed by Venezuela to ONGC Videsh.

Rodriguez assumed office after the detention of Nicolas Maduro by US forces in January.

Commenting on the political transition, Indian officials emphasised working with a friendly government to advance Global South interests, reinforcing a bilateral relationship that has remained warm since former president Hugo Chavez's landmark 2005 visit. —*PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Venezuela's Acting President Delcy Rodriguez at the Hyderabad House, in New Delhi on Thursday —*PTI*

Rahul working against India's stability, spreading fear: BJP

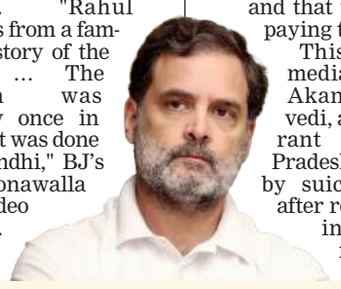
NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday hit back at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his claim that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will no longer remain in office in a year's time.

Gandhi, Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, claimed on Wednesday that the "system that (Modi) once controlled is now shaken and collapsing internally." He further alleged that the Modi government may try to impose something like an Emergency, and warned that an "economic tsunami" is coming.

BJP Information Technology (IT) department head Amit Malviya called Gandhi's remarks on the economy a classic case of "fear-mongering".

"The difference is simple: Congress created vulnerability. (The Modi) government created resilience," he said, in an apparent reference to the final years of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government. "Rahul Gandhi comes from a family with a history of the Emergency ... The Constitution was crushed only once in India, and that was done by Indira Gandhi," BJ's Shehzad Poonawalla said in a video statement. —*PTI*



Modi ruined edu system in 12 yrs, students are paying the price: Rahul

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying an entire generation of youth is paying the price for the extent to which the PM has "ruined" the education system over the past 12 years and that the students are paying the price for it.

This came after media reports said Akanksha Chaturvedi, a NEET-UG aspirant from Madhya Pradesh, allegedly died by suicide in Nagpur after reportedly falling into depression following reports of irregularities in the NEET-UG examination.

In his post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said that Chaturvedi's father "did everything humanly possible" to help her become a doctor, including taking out a loan, but that the uncertainty surrounding the examination meant she "left" before it could bear fruit. H

er death is the tragic outcome of a corrupt and broken system under Prime Minister Modi, Gandhi alleged, adding that Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan remains firmly seated in his position with no reforms or "justice." —*PTI*

Modi will be longest-serving PM of India on 10 June

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will become India's longest continuously serving democratically elected prime minister on 10 June, overtaking the record of India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru.

Modi, who first took oath as PM on 26 May 2014, will complete 4,399 consecutive days in office on 10 June. This will surpass Nehru's record of 4,398 days, from 13 May 1952, until his death on 27 May 1964.

Modi had already overtaken former PM Indira Gandhi's longest uninterrupted tenure on 25 July 2025. Indira served continuously as PM from 24 January 1966 to 24 March 1977, that is 4,077 days. — *PTI*

SEEKS PRADHAN'S SACKING

CJP attacks govt on JEE data exposure

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

The Cockroach Janata Party (CJP) on Thursday criticised the government over the reported exposure of JEE-Advanced 2026 candidate data, alleging that the incident reflected serious shortcomings in the country's ed-ucation system.

The remarks came after IIT Roorkee, which conducted this year's examination, acknowledged a security is-sue in the JEE (Advanced) 2026 results portal. The flaw was reportedly identified by a teenage cybersecurity researcher, who found that candidate records and admit-card documents could be accessed without au-thentication. The party appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to remove Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pra-dhan, alleging a lack of accountability in the education sector.

CJP Chief spokesperson Ashutosh Ranka —*PTI*

CJP founder Abhijeet Dipke, currently pursuing higher studies in the United States, is expected to arrive in Delhi on 6 June and seek permission to hold a protest at Jantar Mantar. The party said climate activist So-nam Wangchuk is also expected to join the demonstration.

Ranka dismissed speculation that the protest could turn violent, reiterating the party's commitment to peaceful and democratic methods. —*PTI.*

CJP backed by 'urban naxals': BJP

BJP President N Ramchander Rao on Thursday alleged that CJPwas being backed by "urban naxals" and organisations like AAP.

"They are trying to spread certain narratives through social media," he claimed.

He said the country's youth would not fall into the trap of people allegedly backed by international investor and philanthropist George Soros and others like him. —*PTI*

BJP flags 'Islam-friendly gym' in Kerala

HYDERABAD, 4 JUNE

Kerala BJP president Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Thursday urged Chief Minister VD Satheesan to ensure there was no appeasement of radical groups, after reports emerged of an "Islam-friendly gym" being launched in the northern district of Palakkad.

In a post on X, Chandrasekhar, who represents the Nemom constituency in the state Assembly, directly addressed the CM, saying: "We will not allow this creeping subterfuge in our state, CM Shri @vdsatheesan. Chandrasekhar was responding to another X post that claimed a gym in Palakkad had been converted to operate under Islamic guidelines.

According to the post, the gym would not play music, would have separate workout timings for men and women, and women members would be expected to follow Islamic dress requirements, including wear-ing a hijab. It also said people from other faiths could join if they agreed to the rules. Earlier, media reports had claimed that a 15-year-old gym in Puthunagaram in Palakkad was recently renovated to become "Islam-friendly" which allowed women to workout wearing hijab. —*PTI*

— ANI

Nihangs impose 'Khalsa tax' at Punjab border

RUPNAGAR, 4 JUNE

Nihang Sikhs led by Achhar Singh set up a symbolic 'Khalsa tax' checkpoint on the Kiratpur Sahib-Manali highway to protest Himachal Pradesh's 'entry tax' on out-of-state vehicles. Singh told reporters they did not force anyone but appealed to Himachal vehicles to voluntarily pay Rs 10. He called it a protest against the tax, questioning where the money goes and likening it to the 'Jaziya tax' from Mughal times. Singh said they will use the 'Khalsa tax' for the poor's welfare and warned police that if the 'entry tax' persists, they will collect it permanently.—*PTI*

— ANI

Darul Uloom warns students against using smartphones

SAHARANPUR, 4 JUNE

Darul Uloom Deoband reiterated its ban on smartphones, warning students of expulsion if caught with multimedia phones. Hostel superintendent Mufti Ashraf Abbas advised students to only carry basic keypad mobiles for contact purposes. Abbas warned, "If any student carries a multimedia mobile, his admission will be cancelled and his name struck off." He explained the ban aims to prevent distraction and time wastage, urging students to focus on academics. Deoband, a prominent Islamic institution, has enforced similar policies for years to maintain discipline and focus among students. —*PTI*

JEE aspirant found hanging at Kota PG facility

KOTA, 4 JUNE

A 17-year-old boy preparing for the joint entrance examination (JEE) in Kota was found hanging from a ceiling fan at his paying guest (PG) accommodation in Rajiv Gandhi Nagar here, with police suspecting he died by suicide, officials said on Thursday. No suicide note was found at the scene, they added. The deceased aspirant was identified as Aryan Ojha from Uttar Pradesh.a Around 10.45 pm on Wednesday, other residents at the PG he had been living in discovered the body and informed police. Ojha was rushed to a hospital where doctors declared him brought dead, Deputy Superintendent of Police Yogesh Sharma said on Thursday. A post-mortem will be conducted after the arrival of family members, he added. —*PTI*

HELP IS AVAILABLE. PLEASE CALL TELE MANAS AT 14416, OR SAHAI AT 080-25497777 FOR SUPPORT

Delhi fire probe focusing on violations

Hotel owner arrested, manager Jai Mishra absconding, licence was in Mishra's name

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Delhi Police on Thursday scoured the fire-ravaged otel Flourish Stay's building in Delhi's Malviya Nagar and found that the exit to the roof was blocked and that cooking heaters were being used in many guest rooms, officials said. The police also arrested hotel owner Lavkesh Bajaj.

These findings have emerged as the key focus areas of the probe into the tragedy that claimed 21 lives on Wednesday, as police set up five teams to trace and arrest the manager of the hotel, Jai Mishra, who is absconding.

Investigators are looking at all aspects, including alleged violations of building norms, fire safety lapses, illegal construction, the actual ownership of the bed and breakfast establishment and the circumstances that may have contributed to the high death toll, officials said.

Hotel owner Lavkesh Bajaj told the police that he had handed over the hotel's management to Mishra and that all related licenses were issued in Mishra's name.

Police sources said Bajaj was the "actual owner" of the property, but the bed-and-breakfast licence was obtained in the name of Jai Mishra.

Rescuers found a man on a wheelchair who was also burnt to death—*SCREENGRAB*

The probe revealed large-scale violations. The property was purchased by Bajaj from a person named Ahluwalia in 2022. At that time, the building had only two-and-a-half floors. Bajaj added more floors, giving the structure five storeys.

Bajaj's children are settled abroad.

OWNER REMANDED

A Delhi court on Thursday sent hotel owner Lavkesh Bajaj to four days' police custody. Judicial Magistrate Bhanu Pratap Singh allowed the Delhi Police's plea seeking the accused's custodial interrogation for four days.

Rs 10 LAKH EX-GRATIA

The Delhi government on Thursday announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs 10 lakh to the next of kin of people who died in the Maviya Nagar fire. People with serious injuries will get Rs 5 lakh in assistance from the Delhi government, the CMO said in a post on X. — *PTI*

Family of eight perished, says grieving kin

NEW DELHI/ GURUGRAM, 4 JUNE

"My entire family has been destroyed. We never imagined something like this would happen to us," says Mahender Garg, who lost his cousin and seven other members of his family in the hotel fire in Delhi's Malviya Nagar.

Among the dead were 48-year-old Vivek Agarwal, his wife Tarjini, their two daughters, his mother and three other relatives.

Standing outside a hospital mortuary on Thursday, Garg recalls the last conversation he had with his cousin, chartered accountant Vivek Agarwal, barely 10 minutes before the fire turned fatal.

"He called me about 10 minutes before the incident got worse. He was frantically saying, 'I am trapped in the basement. Please send the fire brigade quickly and get me out of here'," Garg says, his voice trembling with grief and emotion.— *PTI*

African couple found dead in each other's arms

They say "till death do us part," but an African couple could not be separated even by death. The couple, who were undergoing IVF treatment, were found dead in each other's arms. The couple were discovered inside a bathroom, where they had taken shelter as smoke engulfed the building. Wasim Raja, who was on duty at Max Smart Hospital, said the woman who had a surgery mark on her head, was seated on the toilet seat, while her husband sat on a chair beside her. "They were holding each other. Their arms were wrapped around one another and her head was resting on his shoulder," he said. —*PTI*

Jumping from the window saved me, says Iraqi

A 29-year-old Iraqi who had come to India with his family for a relative's medical treatment, died in the hotel fire. He tried to escape via the stairs but could not due to the smoke. Ali Amer Mosa was among the three from his family staying at the hotel. His Brother-in-Law, Habib Abid, in his 50s, said the family had been staying in the building while his son, Haider, 18, was undergoing treatment for a brain tumour. "I was on the fifth floor. I survived because I climbed out of the building through the window," Habib said. —*PTI*

3.8 million-packet DoS attack on our website blocked: CBSE

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

The CBSE said it thwarted a 3.8 million-packet denial-of-service (DoS) attack on its website, while over 56,000 applications for verification and re-evaluation were received till 9:30 pm.

"This afternoon a 3.8 Million packet denial of service attack on the website was thwarted," the board said in an update posted on X Wednesday.

"Our technical teams are monitoring performance and introducing refinements to deliver a smoother, faster and more seamless experience for students," it said.

Payment gateways of the SBI, Canara Bank, BoB and Indian Bank are available on the portal, the CBSE said, adding that students are not required to have an account with these banks to complete payment.

In a post on X, the SBI said that its payment gateway with the CBSE has till now processed 40,000 payments.

"Indian Bank has successfully implemented a payment gateway solution for students of CBSE for making payments securely through UPI, internet banking, debit cards and credit cards of all banks. Over 5,000 customers having bank accounts with different banks have utilised our payment gateway to remit the fee so far," the Indian Bank said.

In a post, Canara Bank said, "Our gateway services have been extended to CBSE for the benefit of students, enabling payments in a secured manner through UPI, credit & debit cards and internet banking supporting customers of all banks."

Bank of Baroda said it has enabled a secure and seamless payment gateway facility for CBSE students.

The portal will remain open from till 6 June (midnight), and no offline applications submitted after the deadline will be accepted. — *PTI*

501 Bangladeshis held in Gujarat in 2 days

AHMEDABAD, 4 JUNE

Police have apprehended 501 Bangladeshi nationals from various parts of Gujarat in the last two days for staying in the country illegally, officials said on Thursday.

The crackdown, known as "Operation Delta Hunt," began early on Wednesday morning, Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi's office confirmed on Thursday.

Sanghavi told reporters that apart from those detained after being verified as illegal migrants, the background of over 6,200 individuals is being investigated. People who provided accommodation to these migrants or employed them without police verification will also be probed, he added.

Most Bangladeshis were engaged in manual labour in Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, Vadodara and Bharuch, he claimed. —*PTI*

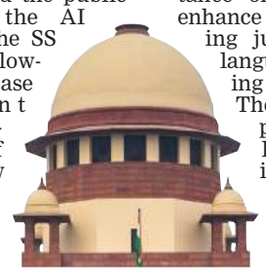
MODERNISATION OF COURTS

SC releases draft on use of AI, seeks suggestions

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

The SC has released draft 'Regulations for the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in courts' which contain a list of permissible and forbidden usage, stating that "no judicial outcome shall be decided through Algorithmic Decision-Making alone."

Inviting suggestions from stakeholders and the public by 20 June, the AI Committee of the SS provides for allowing AI tools in "case management (including identification of defects in new filings), cause list preparation, hearing scheduling and docket prioritisation."



The necessity for such a regulatory framework has become evident as the SC and High Courts have raised concerns about the misuse of AI tools, which sometimes produce non-existent case laws that have even influenced judgments.

At the same time, the SC justices emphasised the importance of using AI tools to enhance benefits like translating judgments into local languages and streamlining legal searches.

The 35-page draft proposes a clear "red line" for technology, indicating that while AI may assist, it will never replace the human mind and its logic. — *PTI*

Sudanese kept in Hyd over suspected Ebola

HYDERABAD, 4 JUNE

A Sudanese who arrived at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport here on Thursday was shifted to an isolation centre for tests after exhibiting Ebola symptoms, authorities said. The passenger had recently travelled to South Sudan and Uganda.

The Airport Health Organisation had set up a screening centre to examine all international passengers for symptoms of Ebola Virus Disease reported in certain countries.

"It is not a confirmed Ebola case. The passenger has a travel history to affected countries. It is being treated as a suspected case," an official told PTI.

The Gandhi Hospital here has set up an Ebola Isolation Centre to keep the suspected patient under observation.

The virus is transmitted to humans from infected wild animals like fruit bats, porcupines and non-human primates and subsequently

spreads among people through direct contact with blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids as well as through contaminated materials like bedding and clothing.

Meanwhile, three persons, who recently returned to Chhattisgarh's Durg district from Africa, have been placed under 21-day home isolation, officials said on Thursday.

The three travellers, however, show no symptoms of the disease and have no history of contact with Ebola-infected persons, officials said. — *PTI*

40 booked for blocking NH-34 in UP over power, water cuts

HAMIRPUR, 4 JUNE

Police have registered a case against around 40 individuals for allegedly blocking NH-34 in UP's Hamirpur district during a protest over power and water supply issues.

The incident occurred on 2 June in Sumerpur town, where approximately 50-60 protesters gathered near Belaahi market, sitting on the highway with sticks, bricks, and stones, demanding the restoration of electricity and water.

The police reported that the blockade disrupted commuter movement and prevented ambulances from passing. Sumerpur Station House Officer (SHO) Durgesh Kumar Rai explained that power department officials had informed the protesters that the outage was caused by a storm, and repair work was still underway. Despite appeals by authorities and police to clear the road, the crowd allegedly became aggressive, damaging private vehicles with sticks and stones, he added.

Many areas of Agra city are facing a severe water crisis due to disruptions in water supply. Women protested holding empty containers —*SCREENGRAB*

The protesters were later removed from the scene by police. Based on a video recorded by a sub-inspector, an FIR was registered on Wednesday evening against Ram Sajeevan, Abhay, Kallu, Kasturi, and 30-40 unidentified individuals. They have been booked under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the National Highways Act, 1956, and the Criminal Law Amendment Act, police said. —*PTI*

Pahlaj Nihalani, ex-CBFC chief no more

MUMBAI, 4 JUNE

Pahlaj Nihalani, 76, veteran producer and former chairperson of CBFC, died on Thursday.

Born on 10 January 1950, Nihalani started his career as a producer with the 1982 movie 'Haathkadi.' He is credited for giving actor Govinda his first big break with the 1986 movie 'Ilzaam.' He also introduced actor Chunky Panday with 'Aag Hi Aag' in 1987.

In January 2015, Nihalani was appointed as the CBFC chairperson.

His tenure was marked by frequent run-ins with filmmakers over cuts.

He introduced guidelines barring certain expletives even in 'A'-rated films, and trimmed kissing scenes.

He was known to have cut the kissing scenes in the James Bond film 'Spectre.' The Udta Punjab (2016) controversy was a battle for creative freedom. The CBFC demanded 94 cuts and wanted all references to Punjab cut, leading the producers to successfully approach the Bombay HC.

The CBFC ordered the Spectre's kissing scenes cut by 50%. The decision sparked a massive backlash on social media, resulting in the satirical hashtag #Sanskari-JamesBond. —*PTI*

TRAGEDY IN MP

Dreams shattered as Iran strike kills man

UJJAIN, 4 JUNE

For nearly 30 years, Manzoor Ahmed worked as a tailor in Kuwait to support his family in Madhya Pradesh. He was looking forward to joining them for his nephew's wedding back home when an Iranian attack on Kuwait airport killed him.

Manzoor's family said on Thursday that officials informed them about his death and shared details about the arrival of his body.

A resident of Ujjain district, the 55-year-old was scheduled to board a flight from Kuwait around 7.30 am on Wednesday for Mumbai, from where he was to take a train to his hometown. His family had planned to welcome him at the railway station with garlands.

A videograb shows Kuwait International Airport being attacked by Iranian drones on 3 June. Iran denied the charge and blamed the US

The tailor had packed his bag to attend his nephew's wedding in Ratlam district on 8 June, they said.

His 18-year-old son Anas Ahmed said he had spoken to him on Tuesday, unaware that it would be their last conversation. "Around 2.30 pm on Wednesday, we received a call from the Indian Embassy informing us that Manzoor had died in the airport attack," his brother-in-law Mohammed Ismail said. Manzoor was looking forward to meeting several relatives after a long time, he said. His body is expected to reach Ahmedabad airport at around 2 am on Friday. He is survived by his wife, son, two daughters and aged mother. — *PTI*

Family of 1978 Sambhal riot victim gets land

SAMBHAL, 4 JUNE

The family of a victim of the 1978 Sambhal riots on Thursday received the first land allotment certificate from the district administration under an initiative to rehabilitate families that left the district following the violence.

Uttar Pradesh Minister J P S Rathore handed over the certificate for a 100-square-metre plot to the family of Ram Sharan Das Rastogi, who migrated from Sambhal in 1979 after the riots. The plot has been allotted in Alam Sarai Dehat village in Sambhal.

The Sambhal riots took place on 29 March, 1978. According family members and local accounts, several people were killed in the violence. Rastogi, a trader, was among those killed after his grocery shop was allegedly looted and set on fire. His family alleged that he was stabbed and his body was later thrown into a well.

Speaking to reporters, Rathore said the rehabilitation initiative was aimed at helping affected families rebuild their lives. —*PTI*

TMC SPLIT

From 215 to 20 in a month: The fall of Didi's empire

The unimaginable has happened to TMC. Party Chief Mamata Banerjee was boycotted at her 2 June dharna, where only six out of 80 TMC MLAs turned up. The following day, 58 legislators backed expelled rebel MLA Ritabrata Banerjee as the Leader of the Opposition —*PTI*

For a politician who built her career on defiance, resilience and an instinctive understanding of Bengal's political pulse, the past month, the one that marks the aftermath of the West Bengal Assembly election results, has been nothing short of a political earthquake for Mamata Banerjee.

Exactly a month ago, Banerjee remained the undisputed face of the Trinamool Congress, commanding a formidable legislative force. But the party's crushing electoral defeat at the hands of the BJP dramatically altered the political landscape.

The setback was made more personal by her own loss from Bhabanipur to her archrival and, as most would like to qualify, her nemesis, Suvendu Adhikari, from a constituency long regarded as her political fortress.

The poll results shrank the TMC's strength in the Assembly to 80 MLAs, leaving Banerjee to lead the opposition from a position of unprecedented weakness. The party had 215 MLAs in the 2021 state polls.

Yet, what appeared to be a devastating electoral defeat has rapidly evolved into an existential crisis for the party she founded in 1998.

On Wednesday, a group of dissident TMC legislators submitted letters of support from 58 MLAs to Assembly Speaker Rathindra Bose, backing expelled leader Ritabrata Banerjee as the leader of their legislature party and staking claim to the position of Leader of the Opposition. Ritabrata claimed that the rebel faction had two more MLAs as backup.

The move, which received the Speaker's subsequent sanction, effectively signalled that more than two-thirds of the party's legislators had drifted away from Banerjee's authority inside the Bengal Assembly.

The symbolism could hardly be starker. Only days earlier, the TMC had expelled Ritabrata Banerjee and fellow MLA Sandipan Saha for alleged anti-party activities, accusing them of undermining the organisation.

Instead of extinguishing the rebellion, the expulsions appear to have accelerated it.

The TMC's journey in the Bengal Assembly has mirrored its meteoric rise until its recent decline.

Riding a historic anti-Left wave, the party secured 184 seats in 2011 and, along with allies, ended the Left Front's 34-year rule. It consolidated its dominance with 211 seats in 2016 before reaching its zenith in 2021, winning 215 of the Assembly's 294 seats under Banerjee's leadership.

Political observers note that Banerjee now confronts a challenge unlike any she has faced in nearly three decades of public life.

- The party had 215 MLAs in the 2021 state polls. Yet, what appeared to be a devastating electoral defeat has rapidly evolved into an existential crisis for the party she founded in 1998. On Wednesday, a group of dissident TMC legislators submitted letters of support from 58 MLAs to Assembly Speaker Rathindra Bose, backing expelled leader Ritabrata Banerjee as the leader of their legislature party and staking claim to the position of Leader of the Opposition. Ritabrata claimed that the rebel faction had two more MLAs as backup.

She has survived electoral setbacks, central investigations, organisational revolts and ideological battles. But this crisis strikes at the very heart of her authority: control over the party apparatus and legislative wing.

"There was little surprise involved in the disintegration of the party once it suffered electoral defeat. That's because the party's primary objective -- to remove the Left Front from state power -- was met once it won the 2011 polls," said Shubhomoy Maitra, political analyst.

"It had no ideological fulcrum or, for that matter, a long-term development vision for the state. There was nothing left for its MLAs to hold on to, except personal interests," he said.

In an apparent attempt to regain control, the TMC dissolved several key organisational committees and frontal wings, a move widely interpreted as a last-ditch effort to prevent a formal split.

Banerjee herself has accused the BJP of using "money, arrests and threats" to engineer a split in her party.

Speaking at a recent protest, she alleged that a concerted campaign was underway to fracture the TMC and weaken opposition politics in Bengal.

The BJP, meanwhile, has little incentive to immediately absorb the dissidents. Several analysts point to the Maharashtra precedent, where a breakaway faction was encouraged to emerge as a separate political force rather than being directly merged into the ruling party.

The growing references in Bengal to an "Eknath Shinde model" reflect concerns that the state's politics may be entering a similar phase of realignment.

"Despite Mamata Banerjee's amazing public life, one cannot ignore the fact that she is past 70. At this age, a turnaround with the same vigour she moved around with during the last four decades seems difficult. Unless, of course, a politically improbable situation crops up that could script her comeback," Maitra said.

Yet, writing Banerjee's political obituary would be premature.

Few leaders in contemporary Indian politics possess her capacity for political reinvention. She rose from the margins to dislodge the 34-year-old Left Front government, survived repeated predictions of decline and transformed a regional movement into one of India's most influential opposition parties.

Even now, the dissident camp has carefully continued to acknowledge her as party chairperson, suggesting that the revolt is directed more against the existing leadership structure and not so much against Banerjee herself.

Senior TMC leader Saugata Roy said there's a strong chance that Banerjee would tide past the current crisis, given her track record as a fighter.

"Such periods of crisis are temporary in a political life. Only a decade ago, the BJP had just three seats in the assembly. Look where they are now," he said.

"Even this won't last forever. Mamata needs to wait this out. These so-called rebel MLAs will also return to the party fold sooner, rather than later," the veteran leader said.

Asked, in the wake of the MLA mutiny against Abhishek Banerjee, whether Mamata Banerjee has reached a juncture where she needs to choose between the party and her nephew, Roy dismissed the conjecture as "superficial".

"There's no need for a knee-jerk reaction to a political problem such as this. Let's see how she handles this," he said.

Yet, observers believe that the central question is whether Banerjee can once again convert adversity into opportunity. If she succeeds in portraying herself as a victim of political engineering, she may yet retain her stature among the party's grassroots workers.

If she fails, the crisis could mark the beginning of the most dramatic unravelling of a political empire Bengal has witnessed since the decline of the Left Front. —*PTI*

SALAR

Parents flag lapses in CBSE's OSM evaluation

The Delhi Parents Association (DPA) has alleged that the CBSE rollout of the On-Screen Marking (OSM) system for Class 12 answer sheet evaluation was rushed and implemented without adequate preparation, training or feedback from teachers.

The government and CBSE have maintained that the OSM system was introduced to enhance transparency, accuracy and efficiency in the evaluation process.

The board has asserted that the digital system eliminates errors in totalling and mark transfer, ensures greater accountability in assessment and provides a more standardised evaluation mechanism.

Speaking to PTI, DPA President Aprajita Gautam claimed that the trial run for the digital evaluation system was conducted over a short period and involved only a limited number of teachers.

"The trial run was done for a very short period. Proper feedback was not taken from teachers. The sample size was also very small because the focus was more on whether the system could handle the load," Gautam said.

She alleged that many teachers were unable to devote sufficient time to familiarise themselves with the system as they were occupied with academic responsibilities in schools.

"The teachers whose primary responsibility is teaching students and ensuring school performance could not take out enough time to practise. Whether they checked papers or practised adequately was not given due attention," she said.

Her remarks come amid growing concerns raised by students over discrepancies in Class 12 results following the introduction of OSM this year.

Responding to CBSE's assertion that the new system had enhanced transparency and was well received by evaluators, Gautam said complaints from students suggested otherwise.

"After seeing so much evidence being shared by students, if officials still say everything is fine, it is very sad. Why not acknowledge that mistakes may have happened? Students are showing proof and saying their papers were not checked properly and marks were not awarded," she said.

She also criticised the functioning of the re-evaluation process, alleging that many students faced difficulties accessing the portal during the initial stages.

"There are many students who could not access the first step of the process and do not even have photocopies of their answer sheets. How will they seek redressal?" she asked.

Gautam further questioned the interpretation of the nearly 4.5 lakh applications reportedly submitted for verification and re-evaluation.

"We need to know where these applications are coming from. The data should be made public, state-wise and city-wise. A large number of students are from government schools and rural areas where access to computers and technical support is limited. Many may not have been able to apply at all," she claimed.

The board on Tuesday said the online portal had received a total of 43,980 applications for verification and re-evaluation of answer sheets as of noon. Later, it said the number had crossed 56,000 as of 9.30pm.

The CBSE on Tuesday opened the online portal for verification of issues observed in scanned copies of answer books and re-evaluation of answers for students dissatisfied with their exam evaluation.

The portal was launched after a delay, with the CBSE having earlier said that applications for verification and re-evaluation of answer books were expected to begin by 29 May.

The board said that the portal will remain open from till 6 June (midnight), and no offline applications or requests submitted after the deadline will be accepted.

The DPA Chief also alleged that, due to a shortage of evaluators, some answer scripts may have been assessed by Trained Graduate Teachers (TGTs) instead of Post Graduate Teachers (PGTs), who are generally assigned Class 12 evaluation work. "I came to know about this from teachers who were involved in checking papers. We got this information when the rechecking window opened," she said.

Calling for an inquiry into the matter, Gautam said CBSE should disclose details regarding the evaluators engaged for the exercise. "How many TGTs and PGTs were hired? State-wise data should be made public. Since evaluators are paid according to the number of papers checked, the records are available and can be verified," she said.

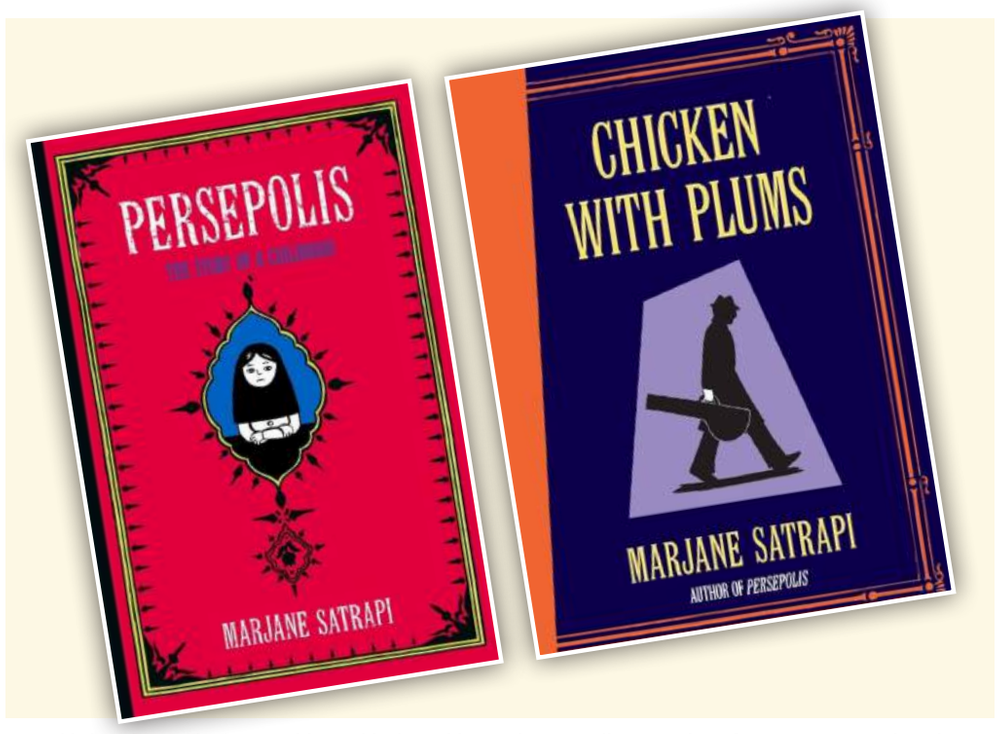
CBSE chairman Rahul Singh and Secretary Himanshu Gupta were on Tuesday shunted out of the national educational board. The Centre has formed a one-member committee to inquire into matters relating to the procurement of services for the on-screen marking system by the CBSE. —*PTI*

Citizens protest against CBSE's On-Screen Marking (OSM) evaluation system outside the board's headquarters in New Delhi —*PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Marjane Satrapi: Voice of Iranian resistance no more



Satrapi is best known for her autobiographical graphic novel 'Persepolis', a coming-of-age story set against the backdrop of the Islamic Revolution in her native Iran. Her other notable works include 'Poulet aux prunes' ('Chicken with Plums') —*PTI*

Acclaimed Iranian-French cartoonist and filmmaker Marjane Satrapi, a prominent advocate for women's rights, has died at 56, the French presidency said Thursday.

President Emmanuel Macron and his wife "pay tribute to a remarkable artist who transformed an Iranian childhood into a universal fable," the statement said.

News broadcaster BFM TV and other French media reported Satrapi has "died of sadness" a little over a year after the death of her husband, Swedish film producer and actor Mattias Ripa, according to a statement from people close to the artist.

The French Academy of Fine Arts, of which she was a member, expressed its deep sadness in a social media statement, paying tribute to "a passionate advocate for cinema and film education" who earlier this year created a foundation to help international students come to Paris to study film.

Satrapi is best-known for her monochrome autobiographical comic book and film 'Persepolis', a coming-of-age tale set against the Islamic Revolution in her native Iran.

'Persepolis' won the Film Critics Grand Prix at the Cannes Festival in 2007 and the César Award for Best Adapted Screenplay in 2008, in addition to being nominated for Best Animated Feature at the 2008 Oscars.

The film, which details her life in Tehran as the wilful daughter of intellectual Marxists, is a reminder that Iranians are just like everyone else, Satrapi told The Associated Press in a 2007 interview in Cannes.

"What we wanted to say is, if these people scare you, look closer: They have parents, they have lovers, they have hope, they have stories," she said.

Iranian authorities at the time protested the movie's inclusion at Cannes, sending a letter to the French Embassy in Tehran.

Satrapi was born on 22 November, 1969, in Rasht, Iran, but her parents sent her to Vienna, Austria, in 1983 to finish her studies because of the extremism in their country following the 1979 Revolution that brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power.

But Satrapi, who found Austria hostile and who desperately missed her parents, returned to Iran in 1989 to attend Tehran University, where she earned a degree in visual communications.

By the time she graduated, Satrapi decided she finally was ready to leave Iran and accept the opportunities her parents had been so desperate to give her a decade before. In 1994 she moved to France. She studied in Strasbourg and later moved to Paris.

Her graphic novels also include 'Broderies' ('Embroideries') and 'Poulet aux prunes' ('Chicken with plums'), which also was adapted into a film. As a filmmaker, she has directed several works including 'La Bande des Jotas' ('The Gang of Jotas') and 'Radioactive' ('Madame Curie'), a biography about the Polish physicist Marie Curie. Satrapi in 2023 coordinated the book 'Femme, vie, liberté' ('Woman, Life, Freedom') together with a group of artists and academics to illustrate the revolts that occurred in Iran after the death of Mahsa Amini in 2022 at the hands of the so-called "morality police."

The work denounces the repression and lack of human rights that Iranian society, especially women, suffers at the hands of the Iranian regime, the foundation said.

Satrapi was elected member of the French Academy of Fine Arts in 2024. She also was offered France's highest award, the Legion of Honor, that same year but declined it, arguing France was not doing enough to support Iranian people fighting for democracy.

"Supporting the women's revolution in Iran cannot be reduced to photos or speeches," she wrote in a January 2025 letter to French authorities. "When people are fighting for democracy, we should support them."

In 2024, Satrapi won the Princess of Asturias Foundation award in Spain for communication and humanities. The organisation said she was "an essential voice in the defence of human rights and freedom." The judges described her as "a symbol of civic engagement led by women."

Satrapi's husband died in April 2025 at 53. On her Instagram page, only one message was left in a series of posts: "Because I have lost the love of my life." —*PTI*

—SCREENGRAB

Sherpa rescued after missing for a week on Everest

KATHMANDU, 4 JUNE

A Sherpa guide was found alive on Mount Everest a week after going missing, and a helicopter was flying him to hospital. Dawa Sherpa was last seen around 29 May descending the mountain but did not reach base camp, though his client did. The pair were among the last climbers as the season ended and the route was dismantled. A cleaning crew located him on Thursday morning crawling down the snowy slopes near Khumbu Icefall above base camp. Pemba Sherpa of 8K Expeditions, coordinating the search, said he was quickly rescued, given food and water, and flown to hospital. Dawa, 52, from Okhaldhunga, guides Polish climbers for Himalayan Traverse. *—PTI*

Clashes erupt in Somalia before anti-govt protests

MOGADISHU, 4 JUNE

Armed clashes broke out in Somalia's capital as opposition supporters and security forces fought Thursday, ahead of a planned anti-government rally. No casualty figures are yet available. Residents reported heavy gunfire and explosions in several neighbourhoods. Abdullahi Mohamed from Howlwadaag district described fleeing his home due to heavy weapons fire. Opposition figures claimed the rally was to protest constitutional violations and President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's attempts to extend his tenure, which the government denied. Police said the violence was from organised attacks by militias linked to political groups. *—PTI*

NASA's dubs Mars Maven dead after silent 6 months

CAPE CANAVERAL, 4 JUNE

NASA has declared its Mars Maven spacecraft dead after six months of radio silence. The mission, launched in 2013 to study Mars' atmosphere, ended after passing behind the planet in December, when it went into a fast spin, disrupting orbit and draining batteries. A NASA review concluded the spacecraft cannot be recovered and will remain in orbit for 50-100 years before crashing into Mars. Maven helped study Martian weather and relay data from Curiosity and Perseverance rovers. Four other spacecraft will continue Mars' exploration, so no rover science is lost. Shannon Curry, Maven's lead scientist, said, "We've accomplished a decade of great science and are proud of our work." *—PTI*

Portugal, Austria elected to UNSC, Germany absent

UNITED NATIONS, 4 JUNE

Portugal, Austria, Kyrgyzstan, Trinidad and Tobago, and Zimbabwe have been elected as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council for 2027-28. India expressed its eagerness to collaborate with them during their tenure. The elections, held by secret ballot, saw Portugal secure 134 votes and Austria 131, replacing Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama, and Somalia. Germany lost the election in the Western European and Other States category, securing 104 votes, and expressed disappointment. German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said, "It's a bitter defeat," citing late entry and support for Ukraine and Israel as possible reasons. Zimbabwe received 182 votes, Kyrgyzstan 142 after four rounds, and Trinidad and Tobago 181 votes. *—PTI*

Israel-Lebanon renew ceasefire; Hezbollah says no

War will resume if Beirut attacked: Iran

Smoke rises after Israeli attacks on areas near Ghaziyeh and Tyre in Lebanon, on Thursday —X@*PRESSTV*

BEIRUT, 4 JUNE

Israel and the Lebanese government agreed to renew their fragile ceasefire and create a number of "pilot" security zones inside Lebanon from which Hezbollah militants would be banned, the US said. However, as the strikes continued on Thursday, with at least four people killed, Hezbollah rejected the ceasefire, demanding the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon.

In a joint statement released after a fourth round of US-mediated talks at the State Department, the two sides said the ceasefire "is contingent on a complete cessation of Hezbollah fire and the evacuation of all Hezbollah operatives" from areas south of the Litani River.

It was not immediately clear how the security zones would be established but the agreement calls for the Lebanese army to take full control of those areas.

> **The ceasefire with Lebanon is a serious mistake and the pipe dreams of advisors who are dragging the Prime Minister (Netanyahu) into incorrect decisions... The Prime Minister should have told President Trump: We love and appreciate you, but Israel is a sovereign and independent state... Lebanon is a partner of Hezbollah. There are Ministers in its government from Hezbollah, and relatives of Hezbollah members serve in the Lebanese army**
>
> -Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israeli National Security Minister

However, Hezbollah leader Naim Kassem, in a written statement read on TV, said the agreement's demand that Hezbollah fighters leave southern Lebanon under fire would mean "surrender, defeat and achieving the enemy's goals."

"What we are concerned about is an end to the aggression, ceasefire and Israel's withdrawal," he said.

Iran has demanded that any lasting truce extend to Lebanon. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who faces elections later this year, wants to press ahead with Israel's offensive until Hezbollah no longer poses a threat. Israeli troops have seized around a fifth of Lebanon.

Notably, a UN peacekeeper from Serbia was killed during the strikes on Thursday.

US President Donald Trump, who faced a rare rebuke from Congress about his war powers on Wednesday, has sought to downplay the diplomatic deadlock, having earlier stressed that Israel would not invade Beirut as Netanyahu planed.

However, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Lebanon's Al Mayadeen television that: "Any attack on Beirut will have grave consequences and will lead to a full-scale resumption of the war."

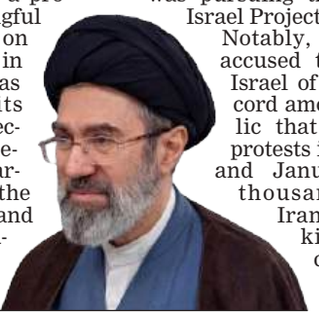
"We will not remain silent," he added. "Our armed forces are ready to strike Israel if it attacks Beirut." *—Agencies*

MOJTABA WARNS 'HYBRID WARFARE' IS UNDERMINING PUBLIC TRUST

TEHRAN, 4 JUNE

Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei said in a message on Thursday that "defeated adversaries" are turning to "hybrid warfare" to undermine national unity in the country.

"The malicious enemy, having been defeated in its confrontation with your brave sons in the Armed Forces and having experienced a profound and meaningful humiliation both on the battlefield and in the public arena, has concentrated its efforts on two objectives in the framework of hybrid warfare: weakening the people's resilience and creating miscalculations among the country's officials," the Ayatollah said, according to state-run Press TV.



Mojtaba warned that the "enemy" – which refers to the US and Israel – seeks to sow discord in Iran by creating doubt and frustration. He said that Iranians must preserve national unity.

He said that Israel, "created 80 years ago", cannot "accept the existence of a strong and independent Iran" because it was pursuing the "Greater Israel Project".

Notably, Iran had accused the US and Israel of sowing discord among the public that led to the protests in December and January where thousands of Iranians were killed in the crackdown. *—Agencies*

After yelling at Bibi, Trump wants to meet Mojtaba

WASHINGTON, 4 JUNE

US President Donald Trump confirmed reports that he yelled at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, while simultaneously saying that he wants to meet Iranian Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei.

"You said, 'Are you f***ing crazy? What are you f***ing doing? I helped you stay out of jail.' Is that true? Did you speak to him in those terms?" an interviewer on New York Post's 'Pod Force One' podcast asked Trump.

"I did," Trump responded. "I was a little bit perturbed at his constantly fighting with Lebanon. I said, Bibi, we gotta stop this".

However, Trump also said Mojtaba was likely the person who would five the final approval to any potential deal.

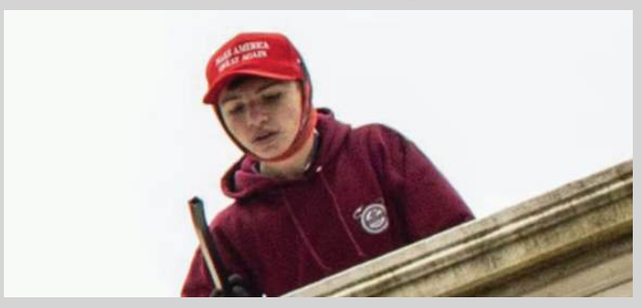
"I would like to meet him, and we probably will meet at some point, depending on how it all works out," said Trump. "I'm not hearing he's doing great. If you believe the stories, he's missing a lot of different parts."

Later speaking at the White House, Trump added that the peace deal "might not happen... But if it happens, it could happen over the weekend," he added. He vowed that upon signing the deal, the Straits of Hormuz would open immediately. *—ANI*

9 killed in strikes in Gaza overnight

At least nine Palestinians were killed in four separate Israeli strikes in Gaza City overnight into Thursday, according to Shifa Hospital, which received the bodies. The fatalities were the latest in the coastal enclave since an October ceasefire deal. While the heaviest fighting has subsided, the shaky ceasefire has seen almost daily Israeli fire.

Man convicted in 6 Jan Capitol riot now works at Pentagon



The Trump administration has appointed Elias Irizarry, convicted in 2023 of a misdemeanour trespassing charge during the 6 January Capitol riot, to the Pentagon's policy office. Pentagon spokesperson Joel Valdez called him a "qualified, patriotic" appointee. Former FBI agent Jared Wise, another 6 January defendant, also previously joined the Justice Department.

To curb terror financing, Pak to enhance intel sharing

ISLAMABAD, 4 JUNE

Pakistan is preparing a new National Internal Security Policy (2026-30) aimed at curbing terror financing through integrated criminal databases and improved intelligence-sharing among provinces.

The proposed policy will be discussed at the National Police Management Board meeting later this month and will incorporate recommendations from provincial police chiefs as well as officials from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

According to Dawn, key proposals include establishing a Counter-Terrorism Department in Gilgit-Baltistan, integrating police data nationwide, strengthening inter-provincial intelligence-sharing and enhancing measures to choke terror financing.

The policy also envisages a greater role for the National Police Bureau in formulating police reforms and national security strategies. NPB chief and Federal Investigation Agency Director General Usman Anwar said there was a "serious disconnect" among civilian law-enforcement agencies and stressed the need for a uniform policing mechanism. Anwar said the meeting would discuss police welfare, functional specialisation, transnational crimes, criminal data integration, training, women police networking and CTD development in Gilgit-Baltistan. *—PTI*

12 killed in fire at elderly care home in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, 4 JUNE

At least 12 people were killed and seven others injured after a fire broke out at an elderly care home in Sri Lanka, police said on Thursday.

The blaze erupted at around 5.30pm on Wednesday at the Mawpiya Sevana Elderly Care Home in Anguruwatota, about 65 km southeast of Colombo, in Kalutara district.

Police said 10 residents were found dead at the premises, while two succumbed to injuries after being admitted to the Horana Base Hospital. More than 70 elderly residents were at the facility when the fire broke out. Around 50 people have been rescued and were being provided temporary accommodation at a nearby school, while seven who are still injured are being provided treatment.

The cause for the blaze in Kalutara on Thursday is yet to be ascertained —SCREENGRAB

The owner of the privately run care home was arrested on Thursday as investigations into the incident continued, police said.

It was the "worst" incident from a fire in recent times on the island, police said.

Although authorities said that the cause of the fire are yet to be determined, initial reports suggest that a gas cylinder explosion contributed to the rapid spread. *—PTI*

UK lawmaker sues xAI over bikini deepfakes

LONDON, 4 JUNE

British lawmaker Jess Asato said on Thursday that she is suing Elon Musk's company xAI for invasion of privacy, alleging that fake images of her were created using the Grok chatbot.

The legislator with the governing Labour Party says someone used Grok to create fake images of her in a bikini without her consent in January after she criticised the spread of deepfake pornography online. She is seeking damages and says she wants to create a precedent that companies can be held liable for the design of their AI systems.

"It is like somebody has digitally stripped me without my consent," she said.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he supports Asato's legal action "100 per cent."

Following an international outcry against deepfake pornography, Musk's company said in January it would no longer allow Grok users to edit images of real people to remove their clothing.

A law passed last year in the UK made it illegal to create or request a non-consensual deepfake image of an adult.

xAI did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Thursday. *—PTI*

ERASING MEMORY?

Citizens shouldn't visit graves of Tiananmen massacre victims: China

BEIJING, 4 JUNE

Police in China told relatives of the victims of the deadly 1989 military crackdown on student-led pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square, that they would not be allowed to visit a cemetery in Beijing on the anniversary, a source said.

Possibly thousands of people, were killed in 1989 as troops fired on crowds that were trying to stop the military from reaching the protesters in Tiananmen Square in the centre of Beijing. The anniversary for the massacre is on 4 June.

Relatives of the victims visited the cemetery on the anniversary for more than 30 years to read memorial statements with police keeping watch, Amnesty International said. They belong to a group called Tiananmen Mothers. Amnesty said it is troubling that China's suppression of the commemoration is escalating.

The iconic 'Tank Man' protester who stood infront of the Chinese weaponry after the government forcibly cleared the Tiananmen Square in 1989 —*Wikimedia*

"No amount of censorship can erase the past," said US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in a statement.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning responded, "We urge the US to ... stop using so-called democracy and human rights as a pretext to interfere in China's internal affairs." *—PTI*

'4.9 million children died before turning 5 in 2024'

LONDON, 4 JUNE

A series of five research papers published in The British Medical Journal estimate that globally, 4.9 million children died before turning five in 2024, including 2.3 million neonatal deaths.

Mortality was found to be highest in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia, even as researchers cited uncertainty in values due to data sparsity and quality.

Researchers, including those from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Office of Strategy and Evidence-Innocenti, Italy, said that global progress in reducing preventable deaths among newborn babies, children, and adolescents has slowed substantially since 2015.

While the mortality rate among children under five declined by 3.9 per cent during 2000-15, the rate of decline was only 1.5 per cent in 2015-24, they said.

Pre-term birth complications and pneumonia were found to be the major causes of mortality among children under five.

"Wealthy nations must invest more in official development assistance. Local philanthropy, especially now with the reduction in official development assistance, need to generously assist national governments and non-government organisations," wrote researchers in a linked editorial. *—PTI*

Rupee falls 7 paise to close at 95.83 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 4 JUNE

The rupee depreciated 7 paise to close at 95.83 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, as heightened geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran drove energy volatility and aggressive safe-haven buying. Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) rate decision is expected on 5 June, as inflation, growth and the rupee are under focus. The key policy rate may remain unchanged at 5.25 per cent. On the domestic equity market front, Sensex advanced marginally by 13.84 points to settle at 74,360.01, while the Nifty was up 10.95 points to 23,416.55. Foreign institutional investors offloaded equities worth Rs 5,616.56 crore on a net basis on Wednesday, according to exchange data.—*PTI*

Gold climbs to Rs 1.6 lakh/10g, silver falls sharply

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Gold prices climbed by Rs 700 to Rs 1,60,300 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday amid a firm trend in the global markets. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity appreciated Rs 700 from Wednesday's closing level of Rs 1,59,600 per 10 grams. However, silver prices fell sharply by Rs 3,800 to Rs 2,65,700 per kilogram. The white metal had closed at Rs 2,69,500 per kg in the previous session. Meanwhile, in the international markets, spot gold gained by nearly 1 per cent to quote at USD 4,471.79 per ounce, and silver rose 1.14 per cent to USD 73.56 per ounce. —*PTI*

Tata-owned grocer BigBasket names new COO

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Tata Group-owned online grocery platform bigbasket announced Seshu Kumar Tirumala as its new Chief Operating Officer (COO). He will oversee operations and focus on driving execution as the company expands its quick commerce segment. Tirumala has been with bigbasket since 2014, initially as National Head of Buying & Merchandising, later becoming Chief Buying and Merchandising Officer. Hari Menon, Founder & CEO, stated, "Seshu has played an important role in building capabilities that have shaped bigbasket's growth, from our private label to sourcing networks. His understanding and track record make him suited for this role." Tirumala said his focus will be on strengthening the farm-to-customer journey and ensuring seamless service during growth. —*PTI*

L&T to invest Rs 18,600 cr in Tamil Nadu

CHENNAI, 4 JUNE

Larsen & Toubro (L&T) signed an MoU with Tamil Nadu's government to undertake projects worth Rs 18,600 crore, promising over 8,000 jobs. The agreement was signed in the presence of Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay and L&T's SN Subrahmanyan at the Secretariat, marking the first industrial pact since the new government assumed office. The projects include a Rs 15,000 crore data centre expansion in Kanchipuram creating 500 jobs, a Rs 2,500 crore electronics unit in Coimbatore generating 2,000 jobs, and a Rs 1,100 crore Kattupalli shipyard expansion providing an estimated 5,700 jobs. These investments aim to boost Tamil Nadu's digital infrastructure, electronics manufacturing, and port facilities, contributing to the state's goal of a USD 1.5 trillion economy by 2036. —*PTI*

LIC holds over 10% stake in Rajesh Exports

FIIs reduced their stake from 17% to 14% in 3 years

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Life Insurance Corporation of India's (LIC) 10.8 per cent stake in Rajesh Exports has come under scrutiny after market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India'S (SEBI) interim findings against the Bengaluru-based gold refiner.

The company was listed more than three decades ago in 1995.

But domestic institutional investors, barring one, kept away from its stock for at least the last 10 years.

However, LIC, India's largest institutional investor, maintained its 10.8 per cent holding in Rajesh Exports without buying or selling a single share since at least September 2023, according to shareholding data for the March 2026 quarter.

The value of LIC's investment has fallen sharply amid the stock's decline. Its holding was worth about Rs 637 crore at the start of 2026 but dropped to around Rs 347 crore after Rajesh Exports shares hit the 5 per cent lower circuit on Thursday.

The stock fell 4.99 per cent to Rs 104.65 on the BSE and Rs 103.92 on the NSE, wiping out Rs 162.38 crore from the company's market capitalisation, which fell to Rs 3,089.9 crore. LIC shares also slipped more than 1 per cent amid concerns over its exposure to the company.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) have steadily reduced their holdings in Rajesh Exports over the past three years.

Notably, their combined stake fell from 17.6 per cent in March 2023 to 14.26 per cent in March 2026.

Major foreign investors include Bridge India Fund, which holds 8.46 per cent, and Schwab Fundamental Emerging Markets Equity ETF with 2.70 per cent.

In its interim order, SEBI said Rajesh Exports repeatedly failed to provide key records sought during the investigation, including subsidiary financial statements, customer and vendor details, inter-company agreements, inventory records and reconciliation statements.

The regulator described the apparent inflation of 97-99 per cent of the company's reported revenue as "egregious and unheard of".

Meanwhile, questions have been raised over a Rs 1,035-crore investment in African mining assets, with SEBI seeking clarity on the valuation and ownership of those investments. —*Salar News*

PhysicsWallah exits student financing, to join NBFCs

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Edtech firm PhysicsWallah announced it will exit direct student financing, opting instead to collaborate with Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) for education loans.

The decision follows a recent Rs 120 crore equity infusion into its fully owned subsidiary, FinZ Finance Private Limited. The company stated it is restructuring its lending strategy and has partnered with several regulated third-party NBFCs to manage student lending, reducing balance sheet and credit risks.

PhysicsWallah's Co-founder Prateek Maheshwari explained, "Our core strength lies in building communities and our online business. Lending is best handled by regulated third-party NBFCs with robust underwriting capabilities." Sources suggest the company is considering options for FinZ Finance, including sale or surrender of licence.

Despite this, the firm reported a narrowed consolidated loss of Rs 69.14 crore in the March quarter, up from Rs 289.27 crore loss a year earlier, with revenue increasing to Rs 918.8 crore.

Maheshwari added, "We will continue to connect students to regulated lenders, enabling affordability and accessibility across the student ecosystem, making it more scalable and robust." —*PTI*

Air India, Riyadh Air ink codeshare MoU

MUMBAI, 4 JUNE

Tata-owned Air India signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Saudi Arabia's new state carrier, Riyadh Air, for a codeshare and interline arrangement, subject to regulatory approval.

The partnership will leverage hubs across Delhi, Mumbai, and Riyadh to offer seamless, single-booking, and smoother onward connections across India, Saudi Arabia, and beyond.

The two airlines will also explore collaboration across reciprocal loyalty programme benefits, cargo services, operational support and digital and technology initiatives designed to enhance the guest experience.

"India and Saudi Arabia are key aviation growth markets, making the it a natural fit, Air India CEO Campbell Wilson said." Adding that Air India "looks forward... to offering passengers more choices across our networks."

The partnership supports demand for travel linked to business, tourism, and family, reflecting the deep economic, cultural, and people-to-people ties between Saudi Arabia and India. —*PTI*

WEST ASIA UNCERTAINTY

India fixes jet fuel benchmark at Rs 115 a litre

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Domestic airlines will be able to buy aviation turbine fuel (ATF) at a fixed price of Rs 86.32 per litre for up to three years under a new government-backed price stabilisation scheme.

This is to shield carriers and passengers from a surge in global fuel costs.

Participating airlines will pay the fixed free-on-board (FOB) benchmark price plus airport charges, oil company margins and applicable taxes, taking the selling price to about Rs 115 per litre in Delhi.

The benchmark compares with the current effective ATF price of about Rs 105 per litre in Delhi, which has remained frozen for more than two months after the government allowed only a partial pass-through of soaring global fuel costs triggered by the West Asia war.

Those not opting for the scheme will be charged prevailing international rate, which is around Rs 142 a litre.

A one-time, interest-free advance of up to Rs 10,000 crore will be provided to oil marketing companies, enabling them to supply jet fuel to scheduled Indian airlines at a fixed price.

ATF accounts for at least 40 per cent of airline operating expenses.

INDIGO HALTS FLIGHTS TO 6 INT'L DESTINATIONS

India's largest airline IndiGo on Thursday said it has temporarily suspended operations to six international destinations, including Hong Kong and Krabi, as part of network optimisation.

The budget carrier has decided to temporarily suspend services to Langkawi, Krabi, Ho Chi Minh, Hong Kong, and Shanghai starting 1 July and Siem Reap effective 3 July until 30 September. —*PTI*

Audio book platform Kuku files for Rs 3,500 cr IPO confidentially

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

–FREEPIK

- Kuku Tech operates vernacular audio platform Kuku FM and short-video streaming app Kuku TV.

Kuku Technologies, which operates vernacular audio platform Kuku FM and short-video app Kuku TV, has confidentially filed draft papers with Sebi for a Rs 3,000 crore Initial Public Offer, sources said

The company is targeting a valuation of up to Rs 15,000 crore (about USD 1.8 billion) through the proposed public issue, they added on Thursday. The IPO, expected in the later part of this financial year, will comprise a mix of fresh issue of shares and an offer-for-sale (OFS) by existing investors. Proceeds from the fresh issue will be utilised for strengthening technology and AI infrastructure, content creation and expansion into new geographies.

Kuku's revenue surged nearly seven-fold to more than Rs 1,400 crore in FY26 from about Rs 240 crore in the previous fiscal, while the company remained close to achieving operational break-even.

Kuku has raised more than USD 150 million from investors such as Fundamentum Partnership, Krafton, Vertex Ventures, Granite Asia, International Finance Corporation, Paramark Ventures, India Quotient and 3one4 Capital. While, Kotak Mahindra Capital, Jefferies, JM Financial and Axis Capital are acting as book-running lead managers to the issue.

When contacted, Kuku Technologies declined to comment on the proposed offering. —*PTI*

TVS SUPPLY ENTERS AIR & DEFENCE SPACE

MUMBAI, 4 JUNE

TVS Supply Chain Solutions on Thursday announced its entry into the aerospace and defence supply market through a joint venture (JV) with Italy-based ALA Group, in which it will hold a 51 per cent stake.

The collaboration is expected to generate over Rs 2,000 crore in revenue by 2031

According to TVS, India's defence logistics market is expected to grow at a CAGR of around 8.6 per cent.

The joint venture will facilitate specialising in end-to-end integrated supply chain solutions, including sourcing and supply of aerospace and defence components, kitting and sub-assembly operations, imports, and warehousing.

ALA Group supports a wide range of aerospace and defence platforms across the air, land, and naval domains. —*PTI*

AMAZON'S ROBOT WORKER

Amazon introduced its next-generation Proteus robot (inset) at European centres, designed to assist employees with physically strenuous tasks. The robot uses natural language commands, allowing workers to instruct it conversationally, without programming. Proteus can handle tasks such as moving heavy carts and covering long distances, enabling staff to focus on higher-skilled roles such as inventory management. Amazon's plan involves investing over 10 billion euros and creating 25,000 jobs across Europe in the coming years. Amazon also plans to expand its robot Vulcan, as part of its European fulfilment centre modernisation and workforce growth initiatives –*PTI*

Vi launches password-less login on Meta apps

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Vodafone Idea on Thursday announced the launch of silent mobile verification (SMV) for its users across Meta platforms — WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram. The move will enable a password-less digital experience for VIL users, according a press release.

VIL describes SMV as a secure, network-based authentication technology. However, the pitch comes as India's digital ecosystem faces growing scrutiny over fraud prevention and trusted authentication, with network-based verification tools increasingly seen as enablers of trust in digital services.

This new feature allows VIL users to access WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram on the telco's mobile network; the verification request is validated through the network itself.

Vi users may experience SMV-supported registration, mobile number verification, login, account recovery, and authentication during security checks, the release said.

This translates into faster onboarding, fewer manual steps, and enhanced protection against phishing and digital identity risks. —*PTI*

AMID ETHANOL FUEL PUSH

Maruti launches India's 1st Flex Fuel car

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Maruti Suzuki India CEO Hisashi Takeuchi, Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, with Petroleum & Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launch India's first flex-fuel car in New Delhi on Thursday – *PTI*

Maruti Suzuki India on Thursday launched India's first flex-fuel passenger vehicle, introducing a version of its Wagon R Flex Fuel capable of running on ethanol-petrol blends ranging from E20 to E100, as the country seeks to reduce crude oil imports and lower carbon emissions.

Flex-fuel vehicles are designed to run on higher ethanol blends such as E85 (85 per cent ethanol, 15 per cent petrol) and E100 (near 100 per cent ethanol), unlike conventional petrol vehicles currently approved for lower ethanol concentrations.

India has been promoting ethanol-blended petrol as part of its strategy to reduce dependence on imported crude oil, one of the biggest contributors to its current account deficit.

The country has already rolled out E20 fuel, containing 20 per cent ethanol and 80 per cent petrol, and is now exploring higher ethanol blends using naturally produced biofuels from feedstocks.

5,200 NEW ETHANOL FUEL STATIONS: PURI

Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Thursday said the government is rolling out around 5,200 ethanol dispensing stations across Delhi-NCR, Pune, Mumbai and Nagpur, to support flex-fuel vehicles.

Puri said earlier efforts to establish E-100 ethanol dispensing stations did not succeed because suitable vehicle models were not available.

"When flex fuel technology enters into this segment at scale, the impact multiplies dramatically," Puri added, referring to India's passenger vehicle segment. —*PTI*

Mirra beats Marta to reach French Open maiden final

Sara and Andrea retained their mixed doubles title

PARIS, 4 JUNE

Russian teen sensation Mirra Andreeva outclassed Ukrainian rival Marta Kostyuk 6-1, 6-3 to enter her first Grand Slam final. The 19-year-old becomes the third-youngest finalist of the 21st century after Gauff, who was just 18 years old when she achieved the feat in 2022, and 17-year-old Kim Clijsters in 2001. With this win, she also avenged her straight-sets losses to Kostyuk in the Brisbane quarterfinals in January.

She has previously reached the semifinals and quarterfinals of the Roland Garros, but this time she bettered her performance by making it to the final, where she'll be up against either 25th seed Diana Shnaider or qualifier Maja Chwalinska.

Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori retained their French Open mixed doubles title on Thursday, staging a comeback to defeat American Evan King and Canadian Gabriela Dabrowski 4-6, 6-3(4).

The Italian duo dominated the deciding match tiebreak on Court Philippe Chatrier and are the first pair to successfully defend the French Open mixed doubles title since Croatia's Ivan Dodig and Taiwan's Latisha Chan in 2018 and 2019. This latest triumph marks a remarkable run of success for Errani and Vavassori, securing their fourth mixed doubles trophy in the last seven Grand Slam tournaments, a stretch that includes back-to-back U.S. Open titles in 2024 and 2025.

Andreeva continued her dream run at Roland Garros, defeating Marta 6-1, 6-3 -X/@FRENCHOPEN

Sara Errani (left) and Andrea Vavassori celebrate with the mixed doubles trophy -X/@FRENCHOPEN

Jannik Sinner exited early, and there's still an all-Italian semifinal

An Italian man will be in the French Open final, and it's not Jannik Sinner.

Not Lorenzo Musetti, either.

Flavio Cobolli will play fellow Italian Matteo Arnaldi on Friday in the first Grand Slam semifinal for both players.

Cobolli beat Felix Auger-Aliassime 4-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 and Arnaldi advanced when Matteo Berrettini, yet another Italian, retired because of an injury to his left hip, with Arnaldi leading 7-5, 5-2 on Wednesday.

Berrettini had received treatment during a medical timeout earlier in the second set."We have to be happy for Italian tennis," Cobolli said. Second-seeded Alexander Zverev and No. 26 Jakub Mensik will meet in the other semifinal.

'Just want to quit tennis right now': Sabalenka

After letting another big lead slip with an error-strewn performance at the French Open, top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka felt like getting as far away from the courts as possible. "Just want to quit tennis right now," Sabalenka said after wasting a lead of a set and two breaks in a 3-6, 7-5, 6-0 loss to Diana Shnaider in the quarterfinals on Wednesday. "We'll see in a few days. Hopefully I'll get back on track mentally." Sabalenka's wait for a first French Open title continues despite the four-time major winner leading 4-1 in the second set and being two points from victory while serving for the match at 5-4. —*PTI*

ODI SERIES VS AFGHANISTAN

Kohli out of Afghanistan ODIs with hamstring injury

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Indian batting superstar Virat Kohli was on Thursday ruled out of the upcoming ODI series against Afghanistan due to a hamstring injury.

The three-match series begins on 13 June in Dharamsala.

"He is out of the ODI series due to a hamstring injury," a BCCI source told PTI.

Kohli, known for his unmatched fitness even at 37 years of age, was in stellar form in the recently concluded IPL, where he steered Royal Challengers Bengaluru to a second consecutive title. He hit the winning runs in the final against the Gujarat Titans.

Reinventing his T20 game, Kohli amassed 675 runs in RCB's triumphant campaign, including a hundred and five fifty plus scores.

After the Afghanistan series, India's next ODI assignment will be in England -- three games beginning from 14 July.

Kohli's absence will take the sheen off the upcoming series.

Though the former India captain is now a one-format player, he remains a top draw for fans worldwide. It is extremely rare for Kohli to miss games due to an injury, given his exemplary fitness standards. It also remains to be seen if Rohit Sharma is available for the whole series against Afghanistan. The opener was included in the squad, subject to fitness, after a hamstring injury affected his IPL appearances.

The national selectors are understood to be leaning towards naming Ruturaj Gaikwad as Virat Kohli's replacement for the three-match ODI series against Afghanistan.

Rohit Sharma to miss Afghanistan ODIs?

Indian cricket team star batter Rohit Sharma's participation in the upcoming ODI series against Afghanistan remains doubtful after he suffered a hamstring injury during IPL 2026, according to ANI. Both Rohit and Hardik Pandya were included in the ODI squad, but BCCI chief selector Ajit Agarkar made it clear that their availability will completely depend on their fitness. The two cricketers will have to clear fitness tests at the BCCI CoE (Centre of Excellence) before joining the squad. Rohit has not reported to the CoE in Bengaluru till now, and the report said that it is likely that he might end up missing the series.

In Suthar versus Dubey, Ashwin has his eyes on the latter

India spin great R Ashwin is looking forward to left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey making his debut in the one-off Test against Afghanistan beginning in Mullanpur on Saturday, following the rookie's recent domestic exploits.

It could be a toss-up between uncapped Manav Suthar and Dubey, with Kuldeep Yadav and Washington Sundar expected to feature in the playing eleven. "My eyes will be on Harsh Dubey. I am curious whether he will get a chance. We will have to wait and see if the team goes with Manav Suthar or Harsh Dubey. But I am particularly interested in Dubey because of his strong domestic season. "He also had a very good IPL season. Those performances work in his favour. I am looking forward to seeing him make his debut," Ashwin told JioStar.

Kuldeep, too, would be keen to perform after an ordinary IPL for the Delhi Capitals.

"Kuldeep Yadav will lead the spin attack against Afghanistan in the absence of Ravindra Jadeja.

He has been bowling with great rhythm and confidence. His ability to turn the ball both ways and his experience in home conditions make him a huge threat.

Former Indian selector Saba Karim believes that Suryakumar Yadav's recent prolonged batting struggles no longer justify his automatic inclusion in the Indian T20I squad.

With selectors shifting their focus toward the 2028 T20 World Cup, he stated that current form must take precedence over past reputations —*PTI*

World Boxing rankings: Jaismine climbs to World No. 1

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

Reigning world champion Jaismine Lamboria climbed to the top of the women's 57kg rankings, while Asian championships gold medallists Priya Ghanghas (60kg) and Suresh (50kg) broke into the top three of their respective categories in the latest World Boxing rankings.Indian boxers featured in the top 10 across nine of the 10 women's weight categories and eight of the 10 men's divisions.In the women's section, Minakshi retained her World No. 1 ranking in the 48kg category, while Preeti Pawar jumped five places to third in the 54kg weight class.—*PTI*

Sri Lanka beats West Indies by 41 runs in the 1st ODI

KINGSTON, 4 JUNE

Pathum Nissanka made a careful 79 and captain Kusal Mendis a fast-paced 72 to lay the foundation for Sri Lanka's 41-run win on Wednesday night over the West Indies in the first one-day cricket international. Nissanka and Mendis put on 136 for the second wicket, and with contributions of 45 by Charith Asalanka and an unbeaten 44 by Janith Liyanage, Sri Lanka reached 303-7 after being asked to bat.

Captain Shai Hope carried the fight to Sri Lanka with an innings of 56 from 66 balls and opener Justin Greaves made 45 from 38 balls, but the West Indies were all out for 262 in the final over.—*PTI*

INDONESIA OPEN

Sindhu exits after losing to World No. 1 An Se Young

JAKARTA, 4 JUNE

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu suffered a second successive defeat to world No. 1 An Se Young in as many weeks to bow out of the Indonesia Open here on Thursday.

Sindhu, who had also lost to the South Korean in the quarterfinals of last week's Singapore Open, showed spark but only in patches to go down 17-21, 14-21 in the round of 16 clash. The defeat extended Sindhu's losing streak against the reigning Olympic champion to 10 matches. The Indian is yet to register a win over An. The contest began on an even footing, with the scores locked at 10-10 midway through the opening game as Sindhu showcased glimpses of her best form and managed to put the Korean under pressure at times.

She briefly edged ahead at 15-14 with some aggressive strokeplay, but An responded in trademark fashion, reeling off a series of points to take a 19-16 lead. The Korean then won two consecutive points, including a gruelling 41-shot rally, to seal the opening game. An carried that momentum into the second game, moving smoothly around the court and racing to a 13-6 lead. Despite finding herself on the back foot, Sindhu continued to fight for every point and narrowed the gap on a few occasions. —*PTI*

CHELSEA LEGEND BOBBY TAMBLING PASSES AWAY AT 84

LONDON, 4 JUNE

Bobby Tambling, the Chelsea great who held the English club's all-time scoring record for decades, has died. He was 84. Tambling's death was confirmed Thursday by Chelsea, which didn't disclose more details, as well as Irish football club Crosshaven, where he had a spell as manager. Chelsea described Tambling as "one of our most legendary players" and said, "his name is written very large in our history."

His 202 goals in 370 appearances for Chelsea from 1959-1970 made him the team's record scorer until 2013, when Frank Lampard surpassed the tally.

Tambling made his Chelsea debut at age 17 in 1959 and was part of the team that won the League Cup in 1965, scoring against Leicester in the final.

His five goals in a single match against Aston Villa in 1966 remain a Chelsea record. He also played for Crystal Palace and earned three international caps for England. After settling in Cork, Ireland, Tambling managed Cork Celtic, Cork City and Crosshaven. Britain's Press Association said Tambling had been diagnosed with dementia in recent years. —*PTI*

ONLY THOUGHT ABOUT CANDIDATES FOR 2 YEARS: PRAGG

OSLO, 4 JUNE

Indian chess ace R Praggnanandhaa on Thursday admitted that it was hard to come to terms with missing out on the Candidates Tournament title, having given "everything" to earn the right to challenge D Gukesh for the World Championship crown, only to be left deeply disappointed.

The 20-year-old Grandmaster was among the eight players who competed in the Candidates in Cyprus earlier this year but endured a disappointing campaign, finishing seventh as Uzbekistan's Javokhir Sindarov claimed the title and the right to face Gukesh for the world crown.

Praggnanandhaa now has an opportunity to put the candidate's disappointment behind him at Norway Chess, where he has emerged as a title contender, sitting third with two rounds remaining and just two points behind leader Wesley So. He can kickstart the new two-year World Championship cycle on a positive note with a title here. —*PTI*

EBOLA: CONGO SEEKS ALTERNATIVES AFTER WC WARMUP GAME CANCELLED

MADRID, 4 JUNE

Congo was still hoping to play its World Cup warm-up against Chile after the mayor of the Spanish city of La Linea de la Concepcion denied authorisation for the match due to health concerns related to the Ebola crisis.

Congo's soccer federation said it was in discussions with the Spanish soccer federation and relevant international bodies to find solutions.

Government authorities in the southern city of La Linea de la Concepcion announced the decision not to authorise next Tuesday's friendly citing possible health risks linked to the Ebola crisis.

Congo was playing a warm-up against Denmark in Liege, Belgium, on Wednesday. —*PTI*

Nair and Agarawal are key players in Maharaja Trophy KSCA T20 auction

BENGALURU, 4 JUNE

Karun Nair, Mayank Agarwal, and Manish Pandey will be the big names in the Maharaja Trophy KSCA T20 season 5 player auction to be held here on Friday.

More than 150 players will be available for selection as six franchises, with a full purse of Rs 60 lakhs each, will enter the auction to build their squads.

The squad limit will be a minimum of 16 players and a maximum of 18 acquired through auction, along with two players from the mandatory Catchment Area Players.

"Players have been classified into five pools — A, B, C, D and E — with base prices of Rs 2 lakh, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 50,000, Rs 75,000 and Rs 30,000 respectively. Franchises are required to acquire at least 12 players from Pools A, B and C combined," the organisers said in a release. —*PTI*

ASIAN GAMES 2026

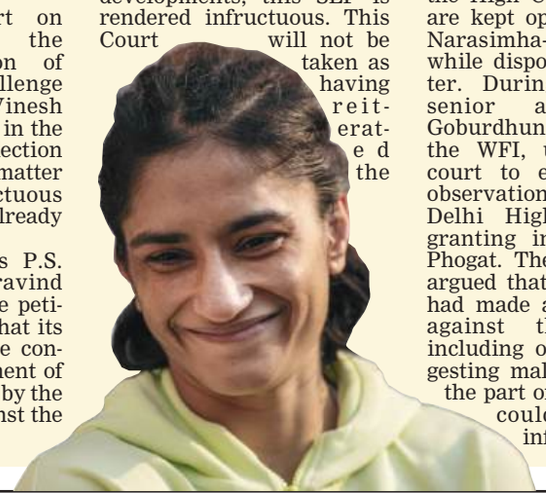
Vinesh Phogat case: SC closes WFI plea

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

The Supreme Court on Thursday closed the Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) challenge against wrestler Vinesh Phogat's participation in the Asian Games 2026 selection trials, ruling that the matter had become infructuous since the trials had already concluded.

A bench of justices P.S. Narasimha and Aravind Kumar disposed of the petition while clarifying that its decision should not be construed as an endorsement of the observations made by the Delhi High Court against the WFI.

"In view of subsequent developments, this SLP is rendered infructuous. This Court will not be taken as having reiterated the findings and observations of the High Court. The issues are kept open," the Justice Narasimha-led Bench said while disposing of the matter. During the hearing, senior advocate D.N. Goburdhun, appearing for the WFI, urged the apex court to expunge certain observations made by the Delhi High Court while granting interim relief to Phogat. The senior counsel argued that the High Court had made adverse remarks against the federation, including observations suggesting mala fide intent on the part of the WFI, which could potentially influence proceedings still pending before a single-judge bench of the Delhi High Court.



A defiant Phogat, however, showed up at the National Open Ranking Tournament in Uttar Pradesh's Gonda.

Phogat had participated in a protest staged by women wrestlers in 2023 against alleged sexual harassment by the then WFI president and BJP leader Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh. Earlier this month, the WFI had declared Phogat ineligible to participate in domestic events till June 26, citing the mandatory six-month notice period linked to athletes returning from retirement under anti-doping rules.. —*PTI*

WFI SUSPENDS FIVE WRESTLERS OVER FAKE BIRTH CERTIFICATES

NEW DELHI, 4 JUNE

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) on Thursday suspended five wrestlers, including U20 Asian Championship trials winner Deepanshu, for four years after their birth certificates were found to be fake during a verification exercise in its crackdown on age fraud in the sport.

Deepanshu, who had won the men's freestyle 65kg event on Wednesday, has been replaced by Pawan Balaji Dhayagude in the squad for the championship, starting June 27 in Pattaya, Thailand.

The other suspended wrestlers are Tanuj Antil, Baljot Singh, Nikhil Dalal and Saket Drall, who reached the final of the 86kg trials. He was removed from the final and was replaced by Sahil Dalal, who eventually grabbed a place in the Indian team.

In an order issued by WFI president Sanjay Kumar Singh, the federation said it had taken a "very serious view" of wrestlers submitting forged birth certificates to gain eligibility for participation in National Wrestling Championships.

WFI said discrepancies in birth certificates had surfaced in several cases in recent months, leading to suspensions and widespread reporting in print. —*PTI*